



Flower and Leaf.





FLOWER AND LEAF

THEIR TEACHINGS FROM THE POETS

Selected and Arranged by

ESTELLE DAVENPORT ADAMS



Flowers are to sovers unto the peul's eyes
Their beuty he rolls him n' b' on n' i'nd set se,
He kno's t'it out'nd seen'gs are but lies,
Or at the most but earthly sh'ides whence
The soul that looks within for tr'd i' met' gness
The presence of some won'tea enlness

J. R. LOWELL

In such green places if e first kin's reuin'
Slept in their shade and angel's en'g'ru ed
With such old com'rs as they did id use
And by frequenting sacred shades grew wise

EDMUND WALLER



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PREFACE.

THE compiler's object in the present volume has been to bring together the best of those poems and passages by English writers which deal more or less thoughtfully and reflectively with the phenomena of tree and flower. Nature has charms not only of form and colour, but of moral suggestiveness, and the compiler has thought that there would be many who would be glad to find collected in one book the cream of the poetry in which the lessons of Nature are set forth, either statedly or by implication.

The compiler does not profess to have included every available poem and passage, but she trusts that she has made a selection which will approve itself to the public and the critics. Her thanks are due to those numerous authors and publishers who have so kindly permitted the reproduction of the many copy-

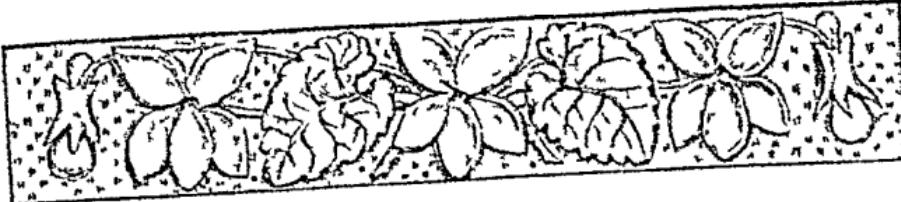


PREFACE.



right pieces in the volume. Every care has been taken to secure correctness in the printing of the text, the arrangement of which is mainly chronological; whilst indexes of contents, of writers, and of first lines have been supplied, with a view to facility of reference.





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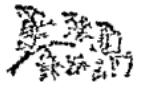



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FLOWERS IN GENERAL.



Sonnet xvii.

SWEET is the Rose, but grows upon a brie .
Sweet is the Juniper, but sharp his bough :
Sweet is the Eglantine, but pricketh near ;
Sweet is the Fir-bloom, but his branch is rough ;
Sweet is the Cypress, but his rind is tough ;
Sweet is the Nut, but bitter is his pill ;
Sweet is the Broom-flower, but yet sour enough :
And sweet is Moly, but his root is ill.
So every sweet with sour is tempered still,
That maketh it be coveted the more :
For easy things, that may be got at will,
Most sorts of men do set but little store.

Why then should I account of little pain,
That endless pleasure shall unto me gain !

EDMUND SPENSER



From "The Faerie Queene."

BOOK II CANTO VI.

BEHOLD, O man' that toilsome pains dost take,
The flowers, the fields, and all that pleasaunt grows.
How they themselves do thine ensample make,
Whiles nothing envious nature them forth throws
Out of her fruitful lap ; how no man knows,
They spring, they bud, they blossom fresh and fair,
And deck the world with their rich pompous shows.
Yet no man for them taketh pains or care,
Yet no man to them can his careful pains compare.

EDMUND SPENSER

From Sonnet Ixxix.

HE only fair, and what he fair hath made :
All other fair, like flowers, untimely fade.

EDMUND SPENSER.

From "Sicclides."

THOU know'st by Neptune's temple close their
grows
A sacred garden, where every flower blows.
Here blushing roses, there the lilies white,
Here hyacinth, and there narcissus bright :
And underneath, the creeping violets show
That sweetness oft delights to dwell below :
Vaulted above with thousand fragrant trees
And under pav'd with shamefast strawberries,
Which, creeping low, do sweetly blushing tell,
That fairest pleasantest fruits do humblest dwell.

PHINEAS FLETCHER.

Sonnet.

LOOK how the flower which lingeringly doth
fade,
The morning's darling late, the summer's queen,
Spoiled of that juice which kept it fresh and green,
As high as it did raise, bows low the head :
Right so my life, contentments being dead,
Or in their contraries but only seen,
With swifter speed declines than e'er it spread,
And blasted, scarce now shows what it hath been.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



As doth the pilgrim therefore, whom the night
Hastes darkly to imprison on his way,
Think on thy home, my soul, and think aright,
Of what yet rests thee of life's wasting day :
Thy sun posts westward, passèd is thy morn,
And twice it is not given thee to be born.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND.

To Blossoms.

FAIR pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do ye fall so fast?
Your date is not so past,
But you may stay yet here a-while,
To blush and gently smile :
And go at last.

What, were ye born to be
An hour or half's delight ;
And so to bid good-night?
'Twas pity Nature brought ye forth,
Merely to show your worth.
And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave :



FLOWERS IN GENERAL.



And after they have shown their pride,
Like you, a-while ;—they glide
Into the grave.

ROBERT HERRICK.

From "Translated out of French."

FADE, flowers, fade ; nature will have it so :
'Tis but what we must in our autumn do !
And, as your leaves lie quiet on the ground,
The loss alone by those that lov'd them found :
So in the grave shall we as quiet lie,
Miss'd by some few, who lov'd our company.

EDMUND WALLER.

Translation from Theocritus.

THE rose is fragrant, but it fades in time ;
The violet sweet, but quickly past the prime ;
White lilies hang their heads, and soon decay,
And whiter snow in minutes melts away :
Such is your blooming youth, and withering so.

JOHN DRYDEN.



From "Vanbrugh's House."

SO chemists boast they have a power
From the dead ashes of a flower
Some faint resemblance to produce,
But not the virtue.

JONATHAN SWIFT.

FLOWERS.

LET sages with superfluous pains,
The learned page devour ;
While Florio better knowledge drains
From each instructive flow'r.

His fav'rite Rose his fear alarms,
All opening to the sun ;
Like vain coquettes who spread their charms,
And shine, to be undone.

The Tulip, gaudy in his dress,
And made for nothing but show,
In every sense, may ^{not} I express
The glittering, empty beau ?



FLOWERS IN GENERAL



The Snow-drop first but peeps to light,
And fearful shows its head :
Thus modest merit shines more bright,
By self-distrust misled.

The Auric'la, which thro' labour rose,
Yet shines complete by art,
The force of education shows ;
How much it can impart.

He marks the Sensitive's nice fit ;
Nor fears he to proclaim,
If each man's darling vice were hit,
That he would *act the same.*

Beneath each common hedge, he views
The Violet, with care ;
Hinting we should not worth refuse,
Although we find it *there.*

The Tuberose that lofty springs,
Nor can support its height,
Well represents imperious kings,
Grown impotent by might.

Fragrant, tho' pale, the Lily blows :
To teach the female breast,
How virtue can its sweets disclose
In all complexions drest.

ANTHONY WHISTLER.



From "The Seasons: Summer."

WHO can, unpitying, see the flowery race,
Shed by the morn, their new-flushed bloom
resign,
Before the parching beam? so fade the fair,
When fevers revel through their azure veins.

JAMES THOMSON.

From "The Seasons: Autumn."

NOT a beauty blows,
And not an opening blossom breathes, in vain.

JAMES THOMSON.

From the "Elegy."

FULL many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

THOMAS GRAY.

To a Lady with some Painted Flowers.

FLOWERS to the fair: to you these flowers I
bring,
And strive to greet you with an earlier spring.



Flowers sweet, and gay, and delicate like you ;
Emblems of innocence, and beauty too.
With flowers the Graces bind their yellow hair,
And flowering wreaths consenting lovers wear.
Flowers, the sole luxury which nature knew,
In Eden's pure and guiltless garden grew.
To loftier forms are rougher tasks assigned ,
The sheltering oak resists the stormy wind,
The tougher yew repels invading foes,
And the tall pine for future navies grows :
But this soft family to cares unknown,
Were born for pleasure and delight alone.
Gay without toil, and lovely without art,
They spring to cheer the sense and glad the heart
Nor blush, my fair, to own you copy these ;
Your best, your sweetest empire is—to please.

ANNA LETITIA BARBAULD

From "Written at the Close of Spring."

THE garlands fade that Spring so lately wove ;
Each simple flower, which she had nursed in
dew,
Anemones, that spangled every grove,
The primrose wan, and hare-bell mildly blue.
No more shall violets linger in the dell,
Or purple orchis variegate the plain,



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Till Spring again shall call forth every bell.
And dress with humid hands her wreaths again.
Ah ' poor humanity ' so frail, so fair,
Are the fond visions of thy early day,
Till tyrant passion, and corrosive care,
Bid all thy fairy colours fade away !
Another May new buds and flowers shall bring ;
Ah ! why has happiness no second Spring ?

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

Fast fall the Leaves.

FAST fall the leaves : this never says
To that, " Alas ! how brief our days " "
All have alike enjoyed the sun,
And each repeats, " *So much is won :*
Where we are falling, millions more
Have dropt, nor weep that life is o'er."

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Field Flowers.

YE field flowers ! the gardens eclipse you, 'tis true,
Yet, wildlings of Nature, I dote upon you,
For ye wast me to summers of old,
When the earth teem'd around me with fairy delight,
And 'when daisies and buttercups gladden'd my sight,
Like treasures of silver and gold.



I love you for lulling me back into dreams
Of the blue Highland mountains and echoing streams,
And of birchen glades breathing their balm,
While the deer was seen glancing in sunshine remote,
And the deep mellow crush of the wood-pigeon's note
Made music that sweeten'd the calm.

Not a pastoral song has a pleasanter tune
Than ye speak to my heart, little wildlings of June:
Of old ruinous castles ye tell,
Where I thought it delightful your beauties to find;
When the magic of Nature first breathed on my mind,
And your blossoms were part of her spell.

Even now what affections the violet awakes!
What loved little islands, twice seen in their lakes,
Can the wild water-lily restore!
What landscapes I read in the primrose's looks,
And what pictures of pebbled and minnowy brooks,
In the vetches that tangled their shore.

Earth's cultureless buds, to my heart ye were dear,
Ere the fever of passion, or ague of fear,
Had scathed my existence's bloom;
Once I welcome you more, in life's passionless stage,
With the visions of youth to revisit my age,
And I wish you to grow on my tomb.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

Hymn to the Flowers.

DAY-STARS ! that ope your frownless eyes to twinkle
From rainbow galaxies of earth's creation,
And dewdrops on her lonely altars sprinkle
As a libation ;

Ye matin worshippers ! who, bending lowly
Before the uprisen sun, God's lidless eye,
Throw from your chalices a sweet and holy
Incense on high ;

Ye bright mosaics ! that with storied beauty,
The floor of Nature's temple tessellate,
What numerous emblems of instructive duty
Your forms create !

'Neath cloistered boughs, each floral bell that swingeth,
And tolls its perfume on the passing air,
Makes Sabbath in the fields, and ever ringeth
A call to prayer—

Not to the domes where crumbling arch and column
Attest the feebleness of mortal hand,
But to that fane, most catholic and solemn,
Which God hath planned ;



To that cathedral, boundless as our wonder,
Whose quenchless lamps the sun and moon supply.
Its choirs the winds and waves—its organ thunder—
Its dome the sky.

There, as in solitude and shade I wander
Through the green aisles, or, stretched upon the sod,
Awed by the silence, reverently ponder
The ways of God,

Your voiceless lips, O Flowers! are living preachers,
Each cup a pulpit, every leaf a book,
Supplying to my fancy numerous teachers
From loneliest nook

Floral apostles! that in dewy splendour
"Weep without woe, and blush without a crime."
O may I deeply learn, and ne'er surrender
Your lore sublime!

"Thou wert not, Solomon! in all thy glory
Arrayed," the lilies cry, "in robes like ours,
How vain your grandeur! ah, how transitory
Are human flowers!

In the sweet scented pictures, heavenly artist!
With which thou paintest Nature's wide-spread hall,
What a delightful lesson thou impartest
Of love to all!



Not useless are ye, flowers ! though made for pleasure :
Blooming o'er field and wave, by day and night,
From every source your sanction bids me treasure
Harmless delight.

Ephemeral sages ! what instructors hoary
For such a world of thought could furnish scope ?
Each fading calyx a *memento mori*
Yet fount of hope.

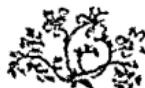
Poethumous glories ! angel-like collection !
Upraised from seed or bulb interred in earth,
Ye are to me a type of resurrection
And second birth.

Were I in churchless solitudes remaining,
Far from all voice of teachers and divines,
My soul would find, in flowers of God's ordaining,
Priests, sermons, shrines

HORACE SMITH.

Flowers.

DEAR friend, love well the Flowers ! Flowers are
the sign
Of Earth's all gentle love, her grace, her youth,



Her endless, matchless, tender gratitude.
When the sun smiles on thee,—why, thou art glad ;
But when on Earth he smileth, *she* bursts forth
In beauty like a bride, and gives him back,
In sweet repayment for his warm bright love,
A world of flowers. You may see them born
On any day in April, moist or dry,
As light as are the Heavens that look on them ;
Some sown like stars upon the greensward ; some
As yellow as the sunrise ; others red
As day is when he sets ; reflecting thus,
In pretty woods, the bounties of the sky.

—And now, of all fair flowers, which lov'st thou best ?
The Rose ? She is a Queen,—more wonderful
Than any who have bloomed on Orient thrones :
Sabæan Empress ! in her breast, though small,
Beauty and infinite Sweetness sweetly dwell,
Inextricable. Or dost dare prefer
The Woodbine, for her fragrant summer heath ?
Or Primrose, who doth haunt the hours of Spring,
A wood-nymph, brightening places lone and green ?
Or Cowslip ? or the virgin Violet,—
That nun, who, nestling in her cell of leaves,
Shrinks from the world in vain ?

Yet, wherefore choose, when Nature doth not choose ?
Our mistress, our preceptress,—*She* brings forth

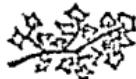


Her broods with equal care ; loves all alike :
And to the meanest as the greatest yields
Her sunny splendours and her fruitful rains
Love all flowers, then. Be sure that wisdom lies
In every leaf and bloom ; o'er hill and dale,
And thymy mountains, sylvan solitudes,
Where sweet-voiced waters sing the long year through :
In every haunt beneath the eternal sun
Where Youth or Age sends forth its silent prayer,
Or thoughtful Meditation deigns to stray

BRYAN WALTER PROCTER

Spring Flowers.

THE loveliest flowers the closest cling to earth.
And they first feel the sun - so violets blue,
So the soft, star-like primrose, drenched in dew,
The happiest of Spring's happy fragrant birth
To gentlest touches sweetest tones reply :
Still humbleness, with her low-breathed voice,
Can steal o'er man's proud heart, and win his
choice
From earth to heaven with mightier witchery
Than eloquence or wisdom e'er could own.
Bloom on, then, in your shade, contented bloom,
Sweet flowers, nor deem yourselves to all unknown.

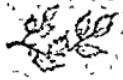


Heaven knows you, by whose gales and dews ye thrive ;
They know, who one day for their altered doom
Shall thank you, taught by you to abase themselves
and live.

JOHN KEBLE.

On the Sight of Spring.

HOW sweet it us'd to be, when April first
Unclos'd the arum-leaves, and into view
Its ear-like spindling flowers their cases burst,
Beting'd with yellowish white or lusky hue :
Though manhood now with such has small to do.
Yet I remember what delight was mine
When on my Sunday walks I us'd to go,
Flower-gathering tribes in childish bliss to join :
Peeping and searching hedge-row side or woods,
When thorns stain green with slow unclosing buds.
Ah ! how delighted, humming on the time
Some nameless song or tale, I sought the flowers ;
Some rushy dyke to jump, or bank to climb,
Ere I obtain'd them ; while from hasty showers
Oft under trees we nestled in a ring,
Culling our "lords and ladies."—O ye hours !
I never see the broad-leav'd arum spring
Stained with spots of jet ; I never see
Those dear delights which April still does bring,



FLOWER AND LEAF.

But memory's tongue repeats it all to me.
I view her pictures with an anxious eye,
I hear her stories with a pleasing pain :
Youth's wither'd flowers, alas ! ye make me sigh,
To think in me ye'll never bloom again.

JOHN CLARE.

From "A Forest Hymn."

THAT delicate forest flower,
With scented breath, and look so like a
smile,
Seems, as it issues from the shapeless mould,
An emanation of the indwelling Life,
A visible token of the upholding Love,
That are the soul of this wide universe.

W. C. BRYANT.

Bring Flowers.

BRING flowers, young flowers, for the festal
board,
To wreath the cup ere the wine is pour'd ;
Bring flowers ! they are springing in wood and vale,
Their breath floats out on the southern gale,
And the touch of the sunbeam hath waked the rose,
To deck the hall where the bright wine flows.

Bring flowers to strew in the conqueror's path—
He hath shaken thrones with his stormy wrath ;
He comes with the spoils of nations back,
The vines lie crush'd in his chariot's track ;
The turf looks red where he won the day—
Bring flowers to die in the conqueror's way !

Bring flowers to the captive's lonely cell,
They have tales of the joyous woods to tell ;
Of the free blue streams, and the glowing sky,
And the bright world shut from his languid eye ;
They will bear him a thought of the sunny hours,
And a dream of his youth—bring him flowers, wild
flowers !

Bring flowers, fresh flowers, for the bride to wear !
They were born to blush in her shining hair.
She is leaving the home of her childhood's mirth,
She has bid farewell to her father's hearth,
Her place is now by another's side—
Bring flowers for the locks of the fair young bride !

Bring flowers, pale flowers, o'er the bier to shed,
A crown for the brow of the early dead !
For this through its leaves hath the white rose burst,
For this in the woods was the violet nurs'd.
Though they smile in vain for what once was ours,
They are love's last gift—bring ye flowers, pale flowers !



Bring flowers to the shrine where we kneel in prayer,
They are nature's offering, their place is there !
They speak of hope to the fainting heart,
With a voice of promise they come and part,
They sleep in dust through the wintry hours,
They break forth in glory — bring flowers, bright flowers !

FFLICIA D. HEMANS.

The Flower of the Desert.

WHY art thou thus in thy beauty cast,
O lonely, loneliest flower ;
Where the sound of song hath never pass'd
From human hearth or bower ?

I pity thee, for thy heart of love,
For that glowing heart, that fain
Would breathe out joy with each wind to rove—
In vain, lost thing ! in vain !

I pity thee, for thy wasted bloom,
For thy glory's fleeting hour,
For the desert place, thy living tomb—
O lonely, loneliest flower !

I said—but a low voice made reply,
“ Lament not for the flower !
Though its blossoms all unmark'd must die,
They have had a glorious bower.

“ Though it bloom afar from the minstrel’s way,
And the paths where lovers tread ;
Yet strength and hope, like an inborn day,
By its odours hath been shed.

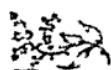
“ Yes ! dews more sweet than ever fell
O’er island of the blest,
Were shaken forth, from its purple bell,
On a suffering human breast.

“ A wanderer came, as a stricken deer,
O’er the waste of burning sand,
He bore the wound of an Arab spear,
He fled from a ruthless band.

“ And dreams of home in a troubled tide,
Swept o’er his darkening eye,
As he lay down by the fountain side,
In his mute despair to die.

“ But his glance was caught by the desert’s flower,
The precious boon of Heaven ;
And sudden hope, like a vernal shower,
To his fainting heart was given.

“ For the bright flower spoke of one above ;
Of the presence felt to brood,
With a spirit of pervading love,
O’er the wildest solitude.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



“Oh ! The seed was thrown those wastes among,
In a bless'd and gracious hour,
For the lorn one rose in heart made strong,
By the lonely, loneliest flower !”

FELICIA D. HEMANS.

Flowers of the Field.

FLOWERS of the field, how meet ye seem
Man's frailty to pourtray ;
Blooming so fair in morning's beam,
Passing at eve away.
Teach this, and oh ! though brief you reign,
Sweet flowers, ye shall not live in vain.

Go, form a monitory wreath
For youth's unthinking brow ;
Go, and to busy manhood breathe
What most he fears to know ;
Go, strew the path where age doth tread
And tell him of the silent dead.

But whilst to thoughtless ones and gay
Ye breathe these truths severe,
To those who droop in pale decay
Have ye no word of cheer ?
Oh yes, ye weave a double spell,
And death and life be token well.



Go then, where wrapt in fear and gloom
Fond hearts and true are sighing,
And deck with emblematic bloom
The pillows of the dying ;
And softly speak, nor speak in vain,
Of your long sleep and broken chain.

And say that He, who from the dust
Recalls the slumbering flower,
Will surely visit those who trust
His mercy and His power ;
Will mark where sleeps their peaceful clay,
And roll, ere long, the stone away.

MRS H. Y.

Faded Flowers.

FAREWELL, ye perish'd flowers
That on the cold ground lie ;
How gay ye smiled
'Mid the brown wild,
'Neath Summer's painted sky ;—
Pass'd hath your bloom away ;
Your stalks are sere and bent :
 On the howling blast
 The rain sweeps past,
From the dim firmament.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



I think me of your piae,
When Zephyr came with spring ;
Then sigh to know
What wreck and woe
A few brief months may bring.
Emblems of human fate,
Ye say—"Though bright and fair
Life's morning be,
It's eve may see
The clouds of grief and care!"

In you I scan the fate
Life's sunniest hopes have met,
When Youth's bright moon
(Alas ! how soon !)
In manhood's twilight set—
Yes ! joy by joy decay'd
As ye did fade, sweet blooms,
Leaving behind
Upon the wind,
Awhile your soft perfumes.

As waned each blossom bright,
So doom'd were to depart
Friend after friend—
And each to rend
A fibre from the heart :



FLOWERS IN GENERAL.

Green spring again shall bid
Your boughs with bloom be crown'd ;
But alas ! to Man,
In earth's brief span,
No second Spring comes round :

Yes ! friends who climb Life's hill
Together, long ago,
Are parted, and
Their fatherland
No more their places know !
We see them not, nor hear them,
Among the garden bowers ;
They have pass'd away
In bright decay,
Like you, ye perish'd flowers !

Mourn not—we meet again,
Although we meet not here ;
Turn ye above,
Where Faith and Love
Taste Heaven's eternal year :—
For though Time's winter bows
The grey head to the clod,
Dust goes to dust,
But (as we trust)
The spirit back to God !

DAVID MACBETH MOIR.

From "An Apotheosis."

I HAVE a love for flowers :
 Guess you not why ? their roots are in the earth,
And, when the dead awake, or talk in sleep,
These hear their thoughts and write them on their
 leaves
For heaven to look on : and their dews come down
From the deep bosom of the blue, whereon
The spirits linger, sent by them perchance
With blessings to their friends. Besides all night
They are wide-waking, and the ghosts will pause,
And breathe their thoughts upon them.

T. L. BEDDOES.

From "To a Wild flower."

I N what delightful land,
 Sweet-scented flower, didst thou attain thy birth?
Thou art no offspring of the common earth,
 By common breezes fanned !
Thy beauty makes rejoice
My inmost heart.—I know not how 'tis so,
Quick-coming fancies thou dost make me know,
 For fragrance is thy voice.



FLOWERS IN GENERAL



And still it comes to me
In quiet night, and turmoil of the day,
Like memory of friends gone far away,
Or, haply, ceased to be. . . .

Thy leaves my memory tell
Of sights, and scents, and sonnets that come again ;
Like ocean's murmurs, when the balmy strain
Is echoed in its shell. . . .

The beauty of the sky,
The music of the woods, the love that stirs
Wherever nature charms her worshippers,
Are all by thee brought nigh.

I shall not soon forget
What thou hast taught me in my solitude ;
My feelings have acquired a taste of good,
Sweet flower ! since first we met.

Thou bring'st unto the soul
A blessing and a peace, inspiring thought !
And dost the goodness, and the power denote
Of Him who formed the whole.

WILLIAM ANDERSON.



Blossoms.

IT is a lesson sad and true
Of human life to me,
To mark the swelling fruit push off
The blossoms from the tree,—

The silver blossoms, ruby streak'd,
That scent the summer air,
That gleam among the dark green leaves,
And make a sunshine there ;

The dew-drop's fragrant dwelling-place
Through all the gentle night ;
The latticed window's fairy screen
From morning's flush of light.

No wonder that the young bird sits
Among the boughs and sings ;
He finds companionship in them,—
Soft-breathing lovely things !

No wonder that the fair child wreathes
Their riches round her brow ;
They are themselves an emblem meet
Of what that child is now.



Alas ! like childhood's thoughts they die—
They drop—they fade away ;
A week—a little week—and then
The blossoms—where are they ?

You tell me they make room for fruit,
A more substantial store ;
But often stolen ere 'tis ripe,
Often rotten at the core.

I do not love the worthless gifts
That bend our childhood down,
And give us for our chaplet wreath
Ambition's leaden crown ;

I do not love the fruits that push
Our flowery hopes away,—
The silver blossoms, ruby streak'd,
Ah ! dearer far are they !

HENRY GLASSFORD BELL.

To a Withered Tree in June.

DESOLATE tree ! why are thy branches bare ?
What hast thou done
To win strange winter from the summer air,
Frost from the sun ?



Thou wert not churlish in thy palmier years
Unto the herd ;
Tenderly gav st thou shelter to the deer,
Home to the bird

And ever since, the earliest of the grove,
Thy smiles were gay,
Opening thy blossoms with the haste of love
To the young May.

Then did the bees, and all the insect wings
Around thee gleam ;
Feaster and darling of the gilded things
Thrt dwell r' the beam.

Thy liberal course, poor prodigal, is sped ,
How lonely now !—
How bird and bee, light parasites, have fled
The leafless bough !

“ Tell me, sad tree, why are thy branches bare ?
What hast thou done
To win strange winter from the summer air.
Frost from the sun ”

“ Never,” replied that forest-hermit lone,
(Old truth and endless !)
“ Never for evil done, but fortune flown,
Are we left friendless



Flowers.

SPAKE full well, in language quaint and olden,
One who dwelleth by the castled Rhine,
When he called the flowers, so blue and golden,
Stars, that in earth's firmament do shine.

Stars they are, wherein we read our history,
As astrologers and seers of old ;
Yet not wrapped about with awful mystery,
Like the burning stars, which they beheld.

Wondrous truths, and manifold as wondrous,
God hath written on those stars above ;
But not less in the bright flowerets under us
Stands the revelation of his love.

Bright and glorious is that revelation,
Written all over this great world of ours ;
Making evident our own creation,
In these stars of earth,—these golden flowers.

And the Poet, faithful and far-seeing,
Sees, alike in stars and flowers, a part
Of the self-same, universal being,
Which is throbbing in his brain and heart.



Gorgeous flowerets in the sunlight shining,
Blossoms flaunting in the eye of day,
Tremulous leaves, with soft and silver lining,
Buds that open only to decay ;

Brilliant hopes, all woven in gorgeous tissues,
Flaunting gaily in the golden light ;
Large desires, with most uncertain issues,
Tender wishes, blossoming at night !

These in flowers and men are more than seeming ;
Workings are they of the self-same powers,
Which the Poet, in no idle dreaming,
Seeth in himself and in the flowers.

Everywhere about us are they glowing,
Some like stars, to tell us Spring is born ;
Others, their blue eyes with tears o'erflowing,
Stand like Ruth amid the golden corn ;

Not alone in Spring's armorial bearing,
And in Summer's green emblazoned field,
But in arms of brave old Autumn's wearing,
In the centre of his brazen shield ;

Not alone in meadows and green alleys,
On the mountain top, and by the brink
Of sequestered pools in woodland valleys,
Where the slaves of nature stoop to drink ;



Not alone in her vast dome of glory,
Not on graves of bird and beast alone,
But in old cathedrals, high and hoary,
On the tombs of heroes, carved in stone ;

In the cottage of the rudest peasant,
In ancestral homes, whose crumbling towers,
Speaking of the Past unto the Present,
Tell us of the ancient Games of Flowers ;

In all places, then, and in all seasons,
Flowers expand their light and soul-like wings,
Teaching us, by most persuasive reasons,
How akin they are to human things.

And with child-like credulous affection
We behold their tender buds expand ;
Emblems of our own great resurrection,
Emblems of the bright and better land.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

The Reaper and the Flowers.

THERE is a Reaper, whose name is Death,
And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.



FLOWERS IN GENERAL.



“Shall I have nought that is fair?” saith he;
“Have nought but the bearded grain?
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,
I will give them all back again.”

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kissed their drooping leaves;
It was for the Lord of Paradise
He bound them in his sheaves.

“My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,”
The Reaper said, and smiled;
“Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where He was once a child.

“They shall all bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care,
And saints, upon their garments white,
These sacred blossoms wear.”

And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
The flowers she most did love;
She knew she should find them all again
In the fields of light above.

O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day;
’Twas an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.



Falling Leaves.

P ALE symbols of our mortal end,
Ye meet me on my way,
Where thrushes coo, and streamlets wend,
As if it still were May.

Your merry dance with wind and light
Your bridal green is gone,
Ye come like farewells to the sight—
Ye fall as from a throne.

Crisp leaves of brown, and red, and yellow,
Ye can but fade away ;
Ye ne'er will rise to meet your fellow
Upon the fresh green spray.

But friends in Christ though fallen now,
And in the churchyard sleeping,
Will blossom yet on Life's spring bough,
And glory end their weeping.

Adown the stream I see you going,
Here spattered with the foam,
And there, on waters scarcely flowing,
Ye rest as if at home.



A dream comes over me in calm
Of trees that never fade,
Of leaves that shed a healing balm,
Of skies that never shade.

Our days are dropping like the leaves—
Our trees will soon be bare !
For shorter are our summer eves,
And colder is the air.

And yet the orchard fruit grows mellow ;
As down the leaves are winging—
Crisp leaves of brown, and red, and yellow,
I hear the reapers singing.

What, then, of all our leaves bereft,
When reaping angels come,
If autumn's golden fruit be left—
Their joyous harvest home !

JAMES BALLANTINE.

From "A Flower in a Letter."

RED roses, used to praises long,
Contented with the poet's song,
The nightingale's being over :
And lilies white, prepared to touch
The whitest thought, nor soil it much,
Of dreamer turned to lover.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Deep violets you liken to
The kindest eyes that look on you,
Without a thought disloyal :
And cactuses, a queen might don,
If weary of a golden crown
And still appear as royal.

Pansies for ladies all ! I wis
That none who wear such brooches, miss
A jewel in the mirror ;
And tulips, children love to stretch
Their fingers down, to feel in each
Its beauty's secret nearer.

Love's language may be talked with these :
To work out choicest sentences,
No blossoms can be meeter,—
And, such being used in Eastern bowers,
Young maids may wonder if the flowers
Or meanings be the sweeter.

And such being strown before a bride,
Her little foot may turn aside,
Their longer bloom decreeing ;
Unless some voice's whispered sound
Should make her gaze upon the ground
Too earnestly—for seeing.



And such being scattered on a grave,
Whoever mourneth there, may have
 A type that seemeth worthy
Of a fair body hid below,
Which bloomed on earth a time ago,
 Then perished as the earthy.

And such being wreathed for worldly feast,
Across the brimming cup some guest
 Their rainbow colours viewing,
May feel them,—with a silent start,—
The covenant, his *childish heart*
 With nature made,—renewing.

E. B. BROWNING.

From "Walder."

THERE grew a lowly flower by Eden-gate
 Among the thorns and thistles. High the palm
Branched o'er her, and imperial by her side
Upstood the sunburnt Lily of the east.

The goodly gate swung oft with many gods
Going and coming, and the spice-winds blew
Music and murmurings, and paradise
Welled over and enriched the outer wild.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Then the palm trembled fast-bound by the feet,
And the imperial Lily bowed her down
With yearning, but they could not enter in

The lowly flower she looked up to the palm
And lily, and at eve was full of dews,
And hung her head and wept and said, " Ah these
Are tall and fair, and shall I enter in ? "

There came an angel to the gate at even,
A weary angel, with dishevelled hair ;
For he had wandered far, and as he went,
The blossoms of his crown fell one by one
Thro' many nights, and seemed a falling star.

He saw the lovely flower by Eden-gate,
And cried, " Ah pure and beautiful ! " and turned
And stooped to her and wound her in his hair,
And in his golden hair she entered in.

SYDNEY DOBELL.

Flowers.

O F all the grace that nature flings
So lavish on this world of ours,
Her fairest and her favourite things,
What can compare with flowers !



The glorious colours lightly born
Of blended sun, and cloud, and air,—
The scattered hues of eve and morn,
All meet and mingle there.

And lo! wherever streamlet flows,
Wherever breeze and sunlight meet,
They spring in every path that knows
The sound of wandering feet.

And through each change of time and tide,
While queenly cities fall away—
While rivers from their courses glide—
Arts flourish and decay—

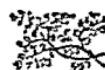
Those frailer things, to Nature true,
Will decorate this earthly frame,
Of every form and every hue,
Unchangingly the same.

They come all-honoured and all-blest—
They come with looks of pleasant cheer,
Waking sweet chords in every breast,
Kind Nature loves to hear.

The child who marks their glad return,
Thence measures life's delightful prime,
And grieves in later years to learn
A sadder rule of time.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Woman, the genius and the queen
Of all that's gracious, good, and fair,
Feels as she walks that world serene,
Her dearest empire there.

And while one thought of love remains
To soothe and charm man's ruder powers,
Hell welcome all their varied trains,
And bless the time of Flowers.

GEORGE MORINE.

Flowers in the City.

QUIET children of the garden,
Nurtured by the gentle showers,
Gleams and shadows—tender flowers,
Never may the hard town harden
Me to what delights are ours
In your beauty, O ye flowers !

Have they torn ye from your quiet
Shadowed haunts, so green and still,
Where delights your sweet hours fill,
Where the tawny bee runs riot
In your sweets at his wild will,
While his songs the glad hush fill !



Strange seem here your pleasant faces,
Strange your beauty meets us here,
Startling us to sudden fear
That of nature's pleasant places,
Sights, and sounds, and scenes, once dear,
Life has grown forgetful here.

Moiling on, alas ! you find us,
Dulled to all that life should know,
Hardly knowing roses blow ;
Well it is that you remind us
Nature blooms, while sad and slow,
From us here our lost years go.

Withered ! ah, and we too wither
In these dim and leafless streets,
Where no glimpse of beauty meets
Our dulled hearts, oh, still come hither,
Bringing from your green retreats
Sense of quiet to these streets !

Sense of quiet—rest and stillness,
Till all but your sweets forgot,
Care 's as if we knew it not ;
And we wake as if from illness,
To a healthful sense of what
God has given but man forgot.



From "On Receiving a Bunch of Heather,
Gorse, and Fern."

WILD blossoms of the moorland, ye are very
dear to me;

Ye lure my dreaming memory as clover does the bee ;
Ye bring back all my childhood loved, when Freedom,
Joy, and Health

Had never thought of weaving chains to fetter Fame
and Wealth.

Wild blossoms of the common land, brave tenants of
the earth,

Your breathings were among the first that help'd my
spirit's birth ;

For how my busy brain would dream, and how my
heart would burn,

Where gorse and heather flung their arms above the
forest fern.

Wild blossoms of the lonely waste, no fear could ever
daunt

My tiny feet from wandering amid your jungle-haunt ;
And many a bunch of purple bells that tower'd above
myself,

And many a fragrant brake I pull'd like some wee
sylvan elf.

But, ah ! those tempting leaves of gold were difficult
to get ;



Alas ! I prove that winning gold is not more easy yet :
But then my fingers only felt the sharp and piercing
smart,
And now I find the worldly thorns oft leave a wounded
heart.

ELIZA COOK.

From "The use of Flowers."

GOD might have bade the earth bring forth
Enough for great and small,
The oak-tree and the cedar-tree.
Without a flower at all.

We might have had enough—enough
For every want of ours,
For luxury, medicine, and for toil,
And yet have had no flowers.

Then wherefore, wherefore were they made,
All dyed with rainbow light,
All fashioned with supremest grace,
Upspringing day and night :—

Springing in valleys green and low,
And on the mountains high,
And in the silent wilderness
Where no man passes by ?



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Our outward life requires them not,
Then wherefore had they birth?
To minister delight to man,
To beautify the earth;

To comfort man—to whisper hope,
Whene'er his faith is dim;
For whoso careth for the flowers
Will much more care for him.

MARY HOWITT.

From "The Day in the Wood."

YELLOW, yellow leaves,
All grown pale with sighing!—
For the sweet days dead,
For the sad days dying.
Yellow, yellow leaves,
How the parting grieves!

Yellow, yellow leaves,
Falling, falling, falling!
Death is best when hope
There is no recalling;
Yet O, yellow leaves,
How the parting grieves!

ISA CRAIG KNOX.



Gathered Flowers.

A GATHERED flower is but a fading thing,
Like Beauty seen in Death ;
Though bright as ever is its colouring,
And odorous its breath.

Then leave the rose upon its parent stem,
Where other roses be ;
'Twill live perchance long summer days with them.
A few short hours with thee.

Whether it glitter on a maiden's breast,
Or twine amid her hair,
'Tis but a fleeting ornament at best,
For Death has placed it there.

A mortal maiden and a withering flower,
They both shall perish soon,
As sure as sombre evening's farewell hour
Succeeds the blaze of noon.

Let women's beauty wear the sterling gold,
The imperishable gem ;
They give to her a brightness manifold,
She adds a charm to them :



FLOWER AND LEAF.



But flowers that strew the earth with fragrant grace,
As stars the welkin fill,
Look loveliest, live the longest, in their place ;
To pluck them is to kill.

GERARD LEWIS.

From "Sonnet."

THERE never yet was flower fair in vain,
Let classic poets rhyme it as they will ; ..
Nor is a true soul ever born for naught
Wherever any such hath lived and died.

J. R. LOWELL.

From "How the Flowers came from
Eden."

A S when some erring child may see
The Father's face no more ;
A Mother's love sends secretly,
Her heart keeps open door ;

So were the flowers from Paradise,
For missioned comfort sent ;
All heaven in their sweet pitying eyes
And where Eve trod they went.

With dear drops of that gladness spilled
In Eden they came pearled ;
Their cups with colours of heaven filled
To pour thro' all the world.

They kiss her feet ; embrace her knees ;
About her dance and play ;
They run before and climb the trees
To cheer her by the way.

On hills and moorlands golden fires
Of gorse in beauty burn ;
Into red roses break the briars ;
A flower for every thorn.

And ever since, their silent march
Goes glowing over ground ;
And under Ocean's azure arch
In an immortal round.

The wee white fairies of the snow
May cover them awhile ;
But from their hiding places, lo !
The fresh young Eden smile !

They come back with their fragrant news,
By brook, and field, and fell ;
They wake, and, in a thousand hues,
Their dream of beauty tell



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Our thoughts are with their fancies streakt
And delicately drawn ;
With them our gray of life is streakt,
Divinely as the dawn.

And ailing souls come forth to see
How the sweet flowers reveal
The waving skirts of Deity,
Which at a touch can heal.

Our dying eyes their balm beseech ;
Our dying fingers fold
Their coolness, when we cannot reach
The flower ; so dank the mould.

Their roots like feeling fingers twine
About the lone grave-bed :
Stars of the ground, they kindly shine
Through that long dark o' the Dead. . . .

With mournful fragrance to my heart
They pierce at times, until
The tears up in mine eyes will start,
With airs of heaven a-thrill.

Still blooms with all its buried charms
That old lost land of ours ;
Above its silent war of worms
A world laughs out in flowers.

GERALD MASSEY.



Dirge.

O HAPPY tree ;
Green and fragrant tree ;
Spring with budding jewels deckt it like a bride !
All so fair it bloomed,
And the summer air perfumed ;
Golden autumn fruitage smiled in crowns of pride.

O huinan tree,
Waesome wailing tree ;
In the winter wind how it rocks ! how it grieves !
On a little low grave-mound,
All its bravery lies discrowned :
O'er its fallen fruit it heaps the withered leaves.

GERALD MASSEY

A Weed.

H OW shall a little weed grow
That has no sun ?
Rains fall and north winds blow —
What shall be done ?



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Out come some little pale leaves
At the Spring's call,
But the harsh north winds blow,
And the sad rains fall.

Would'st try to keep it warm
With fickle breath?
He must, who would give life,
Be Lord of death.

Some day you forget the weed—
Man's thoughts are brief—
And your coldness steals like frost
Through each pale leaf,

Till the weed shrinks back to die
On kinder sod;
Shall a life which found no sun
In death find God?

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

Thanksgiving for flowers.

YOU bring me flowers—behold my shaded room
Is grown all glorious and alive with Light.
Moonshine of pallid primroses, and bright
Daffodil-suns that light the way of the tomb.

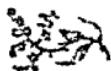


You bring me dreams—through sleep's close-lidded gloom,
Sad violets mourn for Sappho all the night,
Where purple saffrons make antique delight
Mid crown'd memorials of Narcissus' doom.
A scent of herbs now sets me musing on
Men dead i' the fennel-beds on Marathon,
My flowers, my dreams and I shall lie as dead !
Flowers fade, dreams wake, men die ; but never dies
The soul whereby these things were perfected,—
This leaves the world on flower with memories.

A. MARY F. ROBINSON

Consider the Lilies of the Field.

FLOWERS preach to us if we will hear:—
The Rose saith in the dewy morn :
I am most fair ;
Yet all my loveliness is born
Upon a thorn.
The poppy saith amid the corn :
Let but my scarlet head appear
And I am held in scorn ;
Yet juice of subtle virtue lies
Within my cup of curious dyes.
The lilies say : Behold how we
Preach without words of purity.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



The violets whisper from the shade
Which their own leaves have made.
Men scent our fragrance on the air,
Yet take no heed
Of humble lessons we would read.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

Sent with some Leaves and flowers
found in Book
TO THE PERSON WHO HAD PUT THEM THERE
THIRTY YEARS BEFORE.

O H tender leaves and flowers,
Though wither'd, tender yet,
What privilege of joy was ours
In youth when first we met.

Bright eyes beheld your bloom,
Fair hands your charms caress'd,
And not irreverent was the doom
That laid you here to rest.

Sweet phantom, from your bed
Fair to wren, you paint
The likener's of a love long dead
In faded colours faint.



Oh tender flowers and leaves !
 Of all our vanish'd joys—
By glittering spring-tide that deceives,
 By winter that destroys—

Though nought can now restore
 The perish'd to its place,
Eyes dimm'd by time and tears once more
 Shall look you in the face.

SIR HENRY TAYLOR.

Song.

THE last year's leaf, its time is brief
 Upon the beechen spray ;
The green bud springs, the young bird sings,
 Old leaf, make room for May :
 Begone, fly away ;
 Make room for May.

Oh green bud, smile on me awhile,
 Oh young bird, let me stay ;—
What joy have we, old leaf, in thee ?
 Make room, make room for May :
 Begone, fly away ;
 Make room for May.

SIR HENRY TAYLOR.



Autumn.

THINE, Autumn, is unwelcome lore—
To tell the world its pomp is o'er :

To whisper in the Rose's ear
That all her beauty is no more ;

And bid her own the faith how vain,
Which Spring to her so lately swore.

A queen deposed, she quits her state :
The nightingales her fall deplore ;

The hundred-voicèd bird may woo
The thousand-leaved flower no more.

The jasmine sinks her head in shame—
The sharp east wind its tresses shore,

And robbed, in passing, cruelly
The tulip of the crown it wore.

The lily's sword is broken now
That was so bright and keen before :

And not a blast can blow, but strews
With leaf of gold the Earth's dank floor.



The piping winds sing Nature's dirge,
As through the forest bleak they roar ;

Whose leafy screen, like locks of eld,
Each day shows scantier than before.

Thou fadest as a flower, O man !
Of food for musing here is store.

O Man ! thou fallest as a leaf :
Pace thoughtfully Earth's leaf-strewn floor ;

Welcome the sadness of the time,
And lay to heart this natural lore.

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH

The Flower by the Path.

A FLOWER was growing alone,
Then alone and for ever alone.
Some one came by,
Saw the flower how fair it had grown,
Chose it, plucked it to die.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



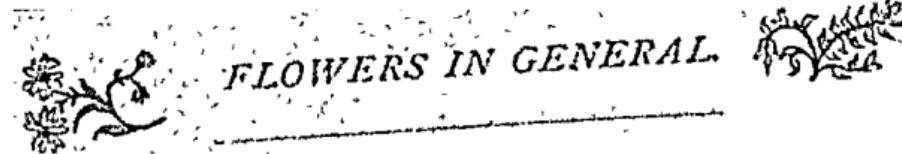
And what is a flower alone,
Then alone and for ever alone,
 Come no one by?
Why should a flower be fair for its own?
 Choose it, pluck it to die.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

Flower Dirges.

SING ye dirges for the flowers?
 Nay—their prime is past and gone;
Fed with sunshine and sweet showers,
They have graced the summer hours,—
 Now their work is done:
From the uplands, fierce and strong,
Bitter blasts will blow ere long—
Happy they, secure of shelter
 From wild winter's wrong!

They have left us, undismayed
 By the change that did befall;
Wearied out with shine and shade,
 It rejoiced them, one and all,
To escape from daylight's ken
 To their chambers subterrain,—



FLOWERS IN GENERAL.

There to rest awhile, and then

Weave them fresh, and weave them fair,

And their fragrant spells prepare ;—

Therefore, sing no mournful dirges, for these flowers,

O men !

But if ye *must* sing, sad-hearted,

Thus your withered joys among,

Wait ye for the hopes departed

Since the year was young.—

For the hopes that, bright and glowing,

Sprang beside the rivers flowing

Through the land of thought erewhile,—

Sprang soul-nurtured, and grew lovely

In Faith's halcyon smile,

Till the world's breath reached them :—slowly

Then ye felt their beauty wane ;

One by one, they vanished wholly

Into Death's domain,—

Fading not, like Earth's pale blossoms

Soon perchance to bloom again,

For high hopes, then, lowly lying,—

Meek hopes, once so fair to see,—

Loving hopes, all coldly dying,—

Heavenward hopes—ah, me !

Sing ye dirges, deep in sadness, for *these* flowers,

O men !



The Winter Work of the Flowers.

THE flowers below are in their tiring rooms
Fast busy, weaving, in those still retreats,
The robes of rainbow dyes, which they must wear,
When Spring, fast running o'er the drowsy earth,
Taps at the closed portals of their homes,
And calls them forth, fresh-perfumed and new-clad,
To the festival of Nature.

T. WESTWOOD.



→* PART II *←

Individual flowers.





INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.



Almond Blossom.

BLOSSOM of the almond trees,
April's gift to April's bees,
Birthday ornament of spring,
Flora's fairest daughterling ;
Coming when no flowerets dare
Trust the cruel outer air ;
When the royal kingcup bold
Dares not don his coat of gold ;
And the sturdy black-thorn spray
Keeps his silver for the May ;—
Coming when no flowerets would,
Save thy lowly sisterhood,
Early violets, blue and white,
Dying for their love of light.
Almond blossom sent to teach us
That the spring-days soon will reach us,
Lest, with longing over-tried,



We die as the violets died—
Blossom, clouding all the tree
With thy crimson broidery,
Long before a leaf of green
O'er the bravest bough is seen ;
Ah ! when winter winds are swinging
All thy red bells into ringing,
With a bee in every bell,
Almond bloom, we greet thee well.

EDWIN ARNOLD.

from "Poems of the Imagination."

XXIX.

TIS hers to pluck the amaranthine flower
Of Faith, and round the sufferer's temples bind
Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,
And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind.

WORDSWORTH

To the Blue Anemone.

FLOWER of starry clearness bright,
Quivering urn of colour'd light,
Hast thou drawn thy cup's rich dye
From the intenseness of the sky ?
From a long, long fervent gaze



INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.

Through the year's first golden days,
Up that blue and silent deep,
Where, like things of sculptured sleep,
Alabaster clouds repose,
With 'the sunshine on their snows ?
Thither was thy heart's love turning,
Like a censer ever burning,
Till the purple heavens in thee
Set their smile, Anemone ?

Or can those warm tints be caught
Each from some quick glow of thought ?
So much of bright *soul* there seems
In thy bendings and thy gleams,
So much thy sweet life resembles
That which feels, and weeps, and trembles,
I could deem thee spirit-fil'd,
As a reed by music thrill'd,
When thy being I behold
To each loving breath unfold,
Or like woman's willowy form,
Shrink before the gathering storm ;
I could ask a *voice* from thee,
Delicate Anemone !

Flower ! thou seem'st not born to die
With thy radiant purity,



FLOWER AND LEAF.



But to melt in air away,
Mingling with the soft Spring day,
When the crystal heavens are still,
And faint azure veils each hill,
And the lime-leaf doth not move,
Save to songs that stir the grove,
And earth all glorified is seen,
As imaged in some lake serene ;
—Then thy vanishing should be,
Pure and meek Anemone !

Flower ! the laurel still may shed
Brightness round the victor's head ;
And the rose in beauty's hair
Still its festal glory wear ;
And the willow-leaves droop o'er
Brows which love sustains no more :
But by living rays refined,
Thou the trembler of the wind,
Thou the spiritual flower
Sentient of each breeze and shower,
Thou rejoicing in the skies,
And transpierced with all their dyes ;
Breathing vase, with light o'erflowing,
Gem-like to thy centre glowing,
Thou the poet's type shall be,
Flower of soul, Anemone !

FELICIA D. HEMANS.



The Anemone.

WHO would have thought a thing so slight,
So frail a birth of warmth and light,
A thing as weak as fear or shame,
Bearing thy weakness in thy name.—
Who would have thought of finding thee,
Thou delicate Anemone,
Whose faintly tinted petals may
By any wind be torn away,
Whose many anthers with their dust,
And the dark purple dome their centre,
When winter strikes, soon as it likes,
Will quit their present rest, and must
Hurry away on wild adventure ?
What power has given thee to outlast
The pelting rain, the driving blast ;
To sit upon thy slender stem,
A solitary diadem,
Adorning latest autumn with
A relic sweet of vernal pith ?
Oh Heaven ! if, as faithful I believe,
Thou wilt the prayer of faithful love receive,
Let it be so with me ! I was a child—
Of large belief, though froward, wild.
Gladly I listened to the holy word,
And deem'd my little prayers to God were heard.



All things I loved, however strange or odd,
As deeming all things were beloved by God.
In youth and manhood's careful sultry hours,
The garden of my youth bore many flowers
That now are faded ; but my early faith,
Though thinner far than vapour, spectre, wraith,
Lighter than aught the rude wind blows away,
Has yet outlived the rude tempestuous day,
And may remain, a witness of the spring,
A sweet, a holy, and a lovely thing ;
The promise of another spring to me,
My lovely, lone, and lost Anemone !

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

The Anemone.

I HAVE wandered far to-day,
In a pleased unquiet way ;
Over hill and songful hollow,
Vernal byways, fresh and fair,
Did I simple fancies follow ;
Till upon a hill-side bare
Suddenly I chanced to see
A little white anemone.

Beneath a clump of furze it grew ;
And never mortal eye did view



Its rathe and slender beauty, till
I saw it in no mocking mood ;
For with its sweetness did it fill
To me the ample solitude.
A fond remembrance made me see
Strange light in the anemone.

One April day when I was seven,
Beneath the clear and deepening heaven,
My father, God preserve him ! went
With me a Scottish mile and more ;
And in a playful merriment
He deck'd my bonnet o'er and o'er—
To fling a sunshine on his ease—
With tenderest anemones.

Now, gentle reader, as I live,
This snowy little bloom did give
My being most endearing throes
I saw my father in his prime ;
But youth it comes, and youth it goes,
And he has spent his blithest time :
Yet dearer grown thro' all to me,
And dearer the anemone.

So with the spirit of a sage
I pluck'd it from its hermitage,
And placed it 'tween the sacred leaves
Of *Agnes' Eve*, at that rare part



Where she her fragrant robe unweaves,
And with a gently beating heart,
In troubled bliss and balmy woe,
Lies down to dream of Porphyro.

Let others sing of that and this,
In war and science find their bliss ;
Vainly they seek and will not find
The subtle lore that nature brings
Unto the reverential mind,
The pathos worn by common things,
By every flower that lights the lea,
And by the pale anemone.

DAVID GRAY.

Apple Blossoms.

APPLE blossoms, full of gladness,
Smiling o'er my garden walk,
Tell of Winter's vanished sadness,
And of songs and sunshine talk :
Pink and white, all rarely painted,
Like the rosy dawn of life,
Bright with hope and unacquainted
With the shadow and the strife.



Apple blossoms, full of sadness,
Raining on my orchard walk,
Tell of Spring's departed gladness,
And of care and sorrow talk ;
All the painted petals shattered,
Soiled and crushed beneath my feet,
All the rosy sunbeams scattered
Which made youth and love so sweet.

But those blossoms, rest of beauty
Strewn along my orchard walk,
Sweetly having done their duty,
As they die, of Autumn talk ;
What though now the branches o'er me
Wear a sad and sober green,
Still there shines a hope before me,
Life's fair fruit shall yet be seen !

RICHARD WILTON

The Aspen.

I WENT out into the wistful night
Along with my little daughter ;
Down in the valley the weird moonlight
With an Elfin shine lit the wan water.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



The trees stood dark in a flame of white ;
A Nightingale sang in the stillness ;
It seemed the hushed heart of the sweet spring night
Brimmed over because of its fulness.

Not a breath of air in the region wide ;
Not a ripple upon the river ;
Yet all of a sudden the Aspens sigh'd,
And thro' all their leaves ran a shiver.

My darling she nestled quite close to me
For such shiel'd as mine arms could give her :
"There went not the least waft of wind thro' the trees,
Then why did the Aspens shiver ?"

I told her the tale, how, by Kedron's Brook,
Our Saviour one evening wander'd ;
A cloud came over His glorified look
As He paused by the way and ponder'd

The trees felt His sighing ; their heads all bow'd
Towards Him in solemn devotion,
Save the Aspen, that stood up so stately and proud ;
It made neither murmur nor motion.

Then the Holy One lifted His face of pain :
"The Aspen shall quake and quiver
From this time forth till I come again,
Whether growing by Brook or River."



And oft in the listening hush of night
The Aspen will secretly shiver,
With all its tremulous leaves turned white,
Like a guilty thing, by the River.

So the souls that look on His sorrow and pain
For their sake, and bow not, may quiver
Like Aspens, and quake when He comes again
Thro' the night for ever, for ever !

GERALD MASSEY

From "The Apology."

CHIDE me not, laborious band,
For the idle flowers I brought ;
Every Aster in my hand
Goes home loaded with a thought.

R. W. EMERSON

To my Mother.

(THE BANIAN.)

THEY tell us of an Indian tree
Which, howsoe'er the sun and sky
May tempt its boughs to wander free,
And shoot, and blossom, wide and high,



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Far better loves to bend its arms
Downward again to that dear earth,
From which the life, that fills and warms
Its grateful being, first had birth.
'Tis thus, though woo'd by flattering friends,
And fed with fame (*if* fame it be),
This heart, my own dear mother, bends
With love's true instinct, back to thee !

THOMAS MOORE.

Barberries.

IN scarlet clusters o'er the grey stone wall,
The barberries lean in thin autumnal air :
Just when the fields and garden-plots are bare,
And ere the green leaf takes the tint of fall,
They come, to make the eye a festival.
Along the road, for miles, their torches flare.
Ah, if your deep-sea coral were but rare
(The damask rose might envy it withal),
What bards had sung your praises long ago,
Called you fine names in honey-worded books,
The rosy tramps of turnpike and of lane,
September's blushes, Ceres' lips aglow,
Little Red-Ridinghoods, for your sweet looks !
But your plebeian beauty is in vain.

T. B. ALDRICH.



The Silvery Birch.

A LONE on the slope of the mountain it grew,
And bathed its light tresses in glittering dew ;
The bird on its boughs linger'd loving and long,
And the stream at its feet ever murmur'd in song ;
It toy'd with the winds, it was happy and free ;
Oh ! the silvery birch was a flourishing tree.

The lord of the mountain beheld it, and sigh'd
That so lovely a thing in the desert should hide.
" Come down from the wilderness, child of the storm
And I'll shield from its anger thy delicate form ;
I've a garden of pleasure more fitted for thee,
And there thou shalt flourish, my beautiful tree."

He loosen'd its roots, and convey'd it away,
To dwell in the bowers with the roses of May ;
But it pined for the breezes that roam'd on the hill,
For the fern of the rock, for the voice of the rill,
And, drooping forlorn 'mid the pride of the lea,
It died in its grandeur, the beautiful tree.

The Blackthorn.

THE April air is shrewd and keen ;
No leaf has dared unfold,
Yet thy white blossom's radiant sheen,
Spring's banner, I behold.
Though all beside be dead and drear
Undauntedly thy flowers appear.

Thou com'st the herald of a host
Of blooms which will not fail,
When summer from some southern coast
Shall call the nightingale.
Yet early, fair, rejoicing tree,
Sad are the thoughts inspired by thee.

All other trees are wont to wear,
First leaves, then flowers, and last
Their burden of rich fruit to bear
When summer's pride is past :
But thou,—so prompt thy flowers to show,
Bear'st but the harsh, unwelcome sloe.
So oft young genius, at its birth,
In confidence untried,
Spreads its bright blossoms o'er the cart',
And revels in its pride ;
But when we look its fruit to see,
It stands a fair, but barren tree.



So oft, in stern and barbarous lands
The bard is heard to sing,
Ere the uncultured soul expands
In the poetic spring ;
Then sad and bootless are his pains,
And linked with woe his name remains.

Therefore, thou tree, whose early bough
All blossom'd meets the gale,
Thou stirrest in my memory now
Full many a tearful tale :
And early, fair, rejoicing tree,
Sad are the thoughts inspired by thee.

WILLIAM HOWITT.

Blue-Bells in the Shade.

THE choicest buds in Flora's train, let other
fingers twine,
Let others snatch the damask rose, or wreath the
eglantine ;
I'd leave the sunshine and parterre, and seek the
woodland glade,
To stretch me on the fragrant bed of blue-bells in the
shade.

Let others call the daffodil, the lily, soft and fair;
And deem the tulip's gaudy cup most beautiful and
rare ;



FLOWER AND LEAF.



But give to me, oh give to me, the coronal that's made
Of ruby orchis mingled with the blue-bells from the shade.

The sunflower and the peony, the poppy bright and gay,
Have no alluring charms for me ; I'd fling them all away.
Exotic bloom may fill the vase, or grace the high-born maid ;
But sweeter far to me, than all, are blue-bells in the shade.

ELIZA COOK.

The Spirit of the Bluebell.

SUGGESTED BY A BEAUTIFUL BASSO-RELIEVO BY
R. WESTMACOTT.

WHEN youthful June strews earth with flowers,
And birds make musical the bowers ;
When sound with sight appears to vie,
Which best shall charm us, earth or sky—
I love, sweet blossom of the wild,
Young summer's azure-vested child,
To see thee hang thy tender bells
In meadow slopes or forest dells.

'Mid feathery fern or spear-like grass,
Thou noddest to me as I pass ;
And, memory's playmate as thou art,
Awakest fancies of the heart,
Entwined with rural life and joy,
That please the man and charm'd the boy,
And send me back, through clouds of years,
To childhood's blushes, smiles, and tears.

I tread the forest solitude,
Thou modest sapphire of the wood,
And Solitude, no longer lone,
Is fill'd with visions all thine own,
With thoughts and dreams, each link'd with thee
By some soft spell of Memory,
Sweet to recall, and dear to hold—
My recollection's minted gold.

I live my early life anew ;
I tread, well pleased, the morning dew ;
With childish voice I trill my rhyme,—
With tiny feet the stiles I climb,—
With little eyes that never tire,
I watch, examine, and admire ;
And gather garlands as I run,
Or sit and weave them in the sun.

Yet, mighty Art, to Nature true,
Can clothe thy form with beauty new.
Lo ! by the artist's powerful spells
Amid thy leaves a spirit dwells—
A spirit with a gentle face,
Imbued with melancholy grace,
And downcast eyes that seem to say,
“I love—I meditate—I pray.”

Triumphant Art ! the spirit fair
Was no creation—she was *there* :
Thou didst but see with keener eye,
What blind materialists deny.
A living spirit breathes in all
To teach, enrapture, and enthrall ;
Each tree that waves, each flower that springs,
Speaks high and spiritual things.

And once by chisel, brush, or pen,
Evoked before the eyes of men,
No future spell can disenchant
The floweret or its habitant :
The beauteous visions breathe and move,
Like creatures of our daily love ;
And, link'd with sympathies refined,
Become immortal as the mind.

But thou, wild bramble ! back dost bring,
In all their beauteous power,
The fresh green days of life's fair spring,
And boyhood's blossoming hour.
Scorn'd bramble of the brake ! once more
Thou bid'st me be a boy,
To gad with thee the woodlands o'er
In freedom and in joy.

EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

The Briony Wreath.

I TWINED around my true love's brow,
Amid her dark brown hair,
A wreath of Briony from the hedge,
With rings and berries fair ;
And called her "Lady Briony"
And darling of the air.

We walk'd like children, hand in hand,
Or on the meadow stile
Sat down, not seeking happiness,
But finding it the while
In Love's unconscious atmosphere,
Or sunlight of a smile.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



“Sweet Lady of my heart,” I said,
“Thou chid’st me in the morn,
For talking of the ‘worthless weeds’
With unconsider’d scorn ;
But now, for bonnie Briony’s sake,
The chiding shall be borne.

“So pleasant are its tendril rings,
That twist and curl and twine ;
So graceful are its leaves and fruit
Amid those locks of thyme ;
Henceforth to me shall Briony
Be equal of the vine.”

“But not for sake of me !” she said ;
“I’d have thee just and true,
And love the wild weeds for themselves,
Sweet babes of sun and dew,
As virtuous as the Rose herself,
Or Violet blushing blue.

“Of all the weeds, and bounteous buds,
That drink the summer shower,
And lift their blossoms through the corn,
Or smile in hed’c and bower,
I plead the cause ;—come hear the tale
And love them from this hour.



“ You’ve called me Lady Briony ;
Behold my sisters bright,
My fair companions of the wood
Who love the morning light,—
Valerian, Saffron, Camomile,
And Rue, and Aconite ;—

“ The golden Mallow of the Marsh,
The Hemlock, broad and rank,
The Nightshade, Foxglove, Meadow-sweet,
And Tansy on the bank,
And Poppy with her sleepy eyes,
And Water-Iris dank.

“ Are we not fair? Despise us not!—
We soothe the couch of pain ;
We bring divine forgetfulness
To calm the stormy brain ;
And through the languid pulse of life
Drop healing, like the rain

“ There’s not a weed however small,
That peeps where rivers flow,
Or in the bosom of the woods
Has privilege to grow,
But has some goodness in its breast,
Or bounty to bestow.



FLOWER AND LEAF.

“And if we poison ;—yours the fault !

Behold, our green leaves wave,
And seem to sigh as men go past,

Wayfarers to the grave ;—

‘ Use us unwisely, we may kill,—
Use wisely, and we save.’

“Our virtues and our loveliness
Are none the less our own,
Because you fail to seek them out
Or miss them when they’re shown ;
And if we’re common, so is light,
And every blessing known.”

“ Well pleaded, Lady Briony !
Thou’rt good as thou art fair ;
And were there no one in the copse,
I’d kiss thy lips, I swear !”
Her laugh rang merry as a bell—
“ Well, kiss me, if you dare !”

CHARLES MACKAY.

To the Small Celandine.

PANSIES, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their praises ;
Long as there’s a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory ;



Long as there are violets,
They will have a place in story :
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star ;
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout !
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little flower ! — I'll make a stir,
Like a sage astronomer.

Modest, yet withal an Elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself ;
Since we needs must first have met,
I have seen thee, high and low,
Thirty years or more, and yet
'Twas a face I did not know ;
Thou hast now, go where I may,
Fifty greetings in a day.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about her nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless Prodigal ;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood !
Travel with the multitude :
Never heed them ; I aver
That they all are wanton wooers ;
But the thrifty cottager,
Who stirs little out of doors,
Joys to spy thee near her home ;
Spring is coming, Thou art come !

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming Spirit !
Careless of thy neighbourhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face
On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane ;—there's not a place
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

Ill beset the yellow flowers,
Children of the flaring hours !
Buttercups, that will be seen,
Whether we will see or no ;



Others, too, of lofty mien ;
They have done as worldlings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine !

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Ill-requited upon earth ;
Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,
Serving at my heart's command,
Tasks that are no tasks renewing,
I will sing, as doth behove,
Hymns in praise of what I love !

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

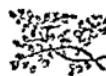
The Small Celandine.

THERE is a Flower, the lesser Celandine,
That shrinks, like many more, from cold and
rain ;
And, the first moment that the sun may shine,
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again !

When hailstones have been falling, swarm on swarm,
Or blasts the green field and the trees distress,
Oft have I seen it muzzled up from harm,
In close self shelter, like a thing at rest.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



But lately, one rough day, this Flower I passed
And recognised it, though an altered form,
Now standing forth an offering to the blast,
And buffeted at will by rain and storm

I stopped, and said with inly-muttered voice,
‘ It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold —
This neither is its courage nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old

The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the dew,
It cannot help itself in its decay ;
Stiff in its members, withered, changed of hue,’
And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was grey.

To be a Prodigal’s Favourite—then, worse truth,
A Miser’s Pensioner—behold our lot !
O Man, that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things Youth needed not !

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

To Cherry-blossoms.

YE may simper, blush and smile,
And perfume the air a-while
But (sweet things) ye must be gone ;
Fruit, ye know, is coming on :
Then, ah ! then, where is your grace,
Whenas Cherries come in place ?

ROBERT HERRICK



To the Herb Chickweed.

CHICKWEED ! will no one sing thee ? Like thy
bard
Lowly, and little noted though thou art,
Creeping o'er fallows with thy pallid sward,
Thou in my humble strains shalt claim a part.
When summer flowers to churlish autumn yield,
And gaunt December bends the leafless groves,
Thou, to the small birds trooping o'er the field,
Art food—the stimulus to future loves.
Henceforth let none despise thee for thy birth,
For powers medicinal in thee are found ;
And haughty men shall own thy sterling worth,
And crave thine aid to cool the anguished wound :
The lordly oak may lift his head on high,
Thou still wilt creep beneath the self-same sky.

ROBERT MILLHOUSE.

The Flower of December.

THE CHRISTMAS ROSE.

I'VE loved thee well, I've loved thee long,
I And gazing on thy beauty,
I ask my heart what secret charms
Makes love such joyous duty ?



FLOWER AND LEAF.

My heart replies.—The soul of truth,
The hope in sadness spoken,
The smiles of light in darkest days,
The constancy unbroken,

The kindly word that falls to day,
May bear its fruit to-morrow ;
The false are often kind in joy ;
The true alone in sorrow.
And though we bless the flower of June,
And all its charms remember,
We've double blessings for the rose
That blossoms in December.

CHARLES MACKAY.

To the Yellow Cistus.

FLOWER, that with thy silken tapestry
Of flexible petals interwove with green,
Clothest the mountain walls of this calm scene ;
We, a love-led poetic company,
Pronounce thee happy ; if happiness it be
In every cleft the bright gray rocks between
To plant thy seemly genis, and reign the queen
Of pathside blossoms over wood and lea.
Live, and of those poor souls who idly moan
Thy fragile lifetime's shortness, reck not aught ;



Thou diest not, when thy ripe blossoms are strown
On the damp earth, or by the tempest caught;
Thou hast a future life to them unknown,
In the eternity of human thought.

HENRY ALFORN.

From "On the Scrape."

AROUND me cluster quaint cloud-berry flowers,
That love the moist slopes of the highest tops,
Pale white, and delicate, and beautiful,
Yet lowly growing 'mid the black peat moss,—
No life with darker root and fairer bloom :
As if the hand of God has secret wrought
Amid the peaty chaos and decay
Of long deep buried years, and from the moss
Entombed, unshaped, unsunned, and colourless,
Set free a form of beauty rare and bright,
To typify the glory and the grace
Which from the dust of death He will awake,
In course of time, on Resurrection morn !

JOHN VELICH.

From "Evangeline."

LOOK at this delicate plant that lifts its head from
the meadow,
See how its leaves all point to the north, as true as
the magnet ;



FLOWER AND LEAF.



It is the compass flower, that the finger of God has suspended
Here on its fragile stalk, to direct the traveller's journey
Over the sea like, pathless, limitless waste of the desert.

Such in the soul of man is faith. The blossoms of passion,
Gay and luxuriant flowers, are brighter and fuller of fragrance,
But they beguile us, and lead us astray, and their odour is deadly,
Only this humble plant can guide us here, and hereafter
Crown us with asphodel flowers, that are wet with the dews of Nepenthe.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

The Cowslip.

LADY, beyond the wide Atlantic main
Huge trees hast thou beheld, and gorgeous flowers,
And poor may be to thee, and dim, and plain
The simple posies of this isle of ours,
Yet, lady, humbly I present to thee
A flower refined in her simplicity—



The lady cowslip, that, amid the grass,
 Is tall and comely as a virgin queen
 The primrose is a bonny peasant lass,
 The bold and full-blown beauty of the green.
 She seems on mossy bank, in forest glade,
 Most meet to be the cowslip's waiting-maid.
 But the coy cowslip—coy, though doom'd to stand
 In state erect upon the open field—
 Declines her head. The lady of the land,
 That must be public, fair would be conceal'd,
 Knowing how much she ought to all impart,
 Yet much retaining with an artless art;
 For there is beauty in the cowslip bell
 That must be sought for ere it can be spied,
 And her pure perfume must be known full well
 Before its goodness can be testified;
 And therefore do I give the flower to thee,
 Thinking thee better than I know or see.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE

To a Crocus.

WELCOME, mild harbinger of Spring,
 To this small nook of earth;
 Feeling and fancy fondly cling
 Round thoughts which owe their birth
 To thee, and to the humble spot
 Where chance has fix'd thy lowly lot.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



To thee, for thy rich golden bloom,
Like heaven's fair bow on high,
Portends, amid surrounding gloom,
That brighter hours draw nigh,
When blossoms of more varied dyes
Shall ope their tints to warmer skies.

Yet not the Lily, nor the Rose,
Though fairer far they be.
Can more delightful thoughts disclose
Than I derive from thee :
The eye their beauty may prefer ;
The heart is thy interpreter !

Methinks in thy fair flower is seen,
By those whose fancies roam,
An emblem of that leaf of green
The faithful dove brought home,
When o'er the world of waters dark
Were driven the inmates of the ark.

That leaf betoken'd freedom nigh
To mournful captives there ;
Thy flower foretells a sunnier sky,
And chides the dark despair
By Winter's chilling influence flung
O'er spirits sunk and nerves unstrung.

And sweetly has kind nature's hand
Assign'd thy dwelling place
Beneath a flower whose blooms expand,
With fond, congenial grace
On many a desolated pile,
Bright'ning decay with beauty's smile.

Thine is the flower of Hope, whose hue
Is bright with coming joy ;
The Wall-flower's that of Faith, too true
For ruin to destroy ;—
And where, O ! where should Hope up spring,
But under Faith's protecting wing ?

BERNARD BARTON.

Spring Crocuses.

NOT to cold-hearted weary care
Give up thy heart, a votary won ;
Come now, a simple pleasure seize,
Where a thousand thousand crocuses
Are shining in the sun. —

I have seen them oft, and loved them long,
Comparing them, in wild vagary,
To some enchanted lake that lies
Beneath the bright enchanted skies,
In the old land of faéry.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



But why need we comparisons,
They are themselves so beautiful :
Are they not flowers, dear English flowers,
Growing in meadows that are ours,
For any child to pull?

And from the dim and treeless town
The little children have gone forth,
Running and leaping, happy bands,
With little baskets in their hands,
And hearts brimful of mirth.

And darkly pondering on the past,
Slowly have come down aged men,
Feeble with years, and bent and hoar,
To gaze upon the flowers once more ;
Never to gaze again.

Here come the children of the poor,
Leaving their early cares behind,
Gamesome as the wild forest herd,
And free as is the mountain bird
Or as the mountain wind.

Some like strong lambs at play ; and some
Culling of choicest flowers a few ;



INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.

And some, like gleaners, bending low,
Keep gathering in a steady row,
And never have enow.

The little infant 'mong the grass
Sits, meekly thinking to itself;
Until comes out a gaudy fly,
Or a small bee goes humming by,
Then shouts the merry elf.

Ay, sing unto the lark above ye,
And freely wander where ye list;
And glean up, from the abounding earth,
Strong joy and rosy health and mirth;
Good gifts too often missed:

For carelessly ye wander now;
But passing life brings deepening shadows,
And ye, in some far burning clime,
May oft retrace the youthful time
Spent in your native meadows.

And God sent flowers to beautify
The earth, and cheer man's careful mood;
And he is happiest who has power
To gather wisdom from a flower,
And wake his heart in every hour
To wholesome gratitude.

MARY HOWITT.



Lines on a White Cyclamen brought
from Jerusalem.

YOUNG blossom ! delicately pure and fair,
Ere unshine's touch hath warmed the snow-
chilled sod ,
How comes thou to this grim Northern air,
 Flower from the land of God ?

Not to our clime, oh, petals pale and sweet,
Are ye akin—our realms of strife and pain—
Nor born to be down-trodden under feet
 Still hurrying after gain ;

Thy home is on each holy mountain-side,
O'er plains filled with the wind-flower's flaming
gleam,
O'er dells where the massed oleanders hide,
 In rose clouds the blue stream.

Thou bringest back those deathless moments when
Thy native heaven grew strong with solemn powers,
And breathest here—A type of other men,
 And other lives, than ours.

Yes, above all, thy leaflets fresh and white,
White as the unreached snows that never wane,
Recall the Man who walked thy hills in light,
 That spirit without stain.

For, whilst thy virgin grace above may show
How spotless His clear life, the tinge of red
Beneath that purity is whispering low
Of Blood for sinners shed.

So that, whene'er within us is renewed
The thought how worn by long unsleeping hours,
He moved across thy Syrian solitude,
Through a wild wealth of flowers ;

We feel that He, sustained by love alone,
Was there to commune with white stars, and greet
More than all growths by spring around Him thrown,
Thy white pearls at His feet.

And hence we dream, if dreams may thus presume,
No fire-flash poured from the anemone,
No oleander's hot and eager bloom
Spoke to His heart like thee.

Bring then to winters withering up with cold,
A balm lent from thy south—To souls that pine
Here hunger-bitten with the lust of gold,
Memories and hopes divine.

SIR F. H. DOYLE.



Love's Colours.

NOT violets I gave my love,
That in their life are sweet and rare,
And deep in colour, as the heart

Whose every thought of her is prayer ;
For violets grow pale and dry,
And lose the semblance of her eye

No lily's bud I gave my love,
Though she is white and pure as they ;
For they are cold to smell and touch,
And blossom but a single day :
And pressed by love, in love's own page,
They yellow into early age

But cyclamen I chose to give,
Whose pale white blossoms at the tips
(All else is driven snow) are pink,
And mind me of her perfect lips ;
Still, till this flower is kept and old,
Its worth to love is yet untold.

Old, kept, and kissed, it does not lose
As other flowers the hues they wear :
Love is triumphant, and this bloom
Will never whiten from despair ;
Rather it deepens as it lies,
This flower that purples when it dies



So shall my love, as years roll by,
Take kingly colours from its own;
Sole master of her vanquished heart,
Am I not master of a throne?
Crushed by no foot, nor cast away,
My purple love shall rule the day.

C. C. FRASER TYTLER

From "The Wreaths."

WHO wears the Cypress, dark and drear?
The one who is shedding the mourner's
tear:
The gloomy branch for ever twines
Round' forehead's graved' with sorrow's lines
'Tis the type of a sad and lonely heart,
That hath seen its dearest hopes depart.
Oh! who can like the chaplet band
That is wove by Melancholy's hand?

ELIZA COOK

To Daffodils.

FAIR Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early rising sun
Has not attam'd his noon.



FLOWER AND LEAF.

Stay, stay,
Until the hastening day
Has run
But to the even-song ;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you ;
We have as short a spring ;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die
As your hours do, and dry
Away,
Like to the summer's rain ;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

ROBERT HERRICK.

3 Wandered Lonely.

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils ;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.



Continuous as the stars that shine
 And twinkle on the milky way,
 They stretched in never-ending line
 Along the margin of a bay :
 Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
 Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced ; but they
 Out-did the sparkling waves in glee :
 A poet could not but be gay,
 In such a jocund company :
 I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
 What wealth the show to me had brought :

For oft, when on my couch I lie
 In vacant or in pensive mood,
 They flash upon that inward eye
 Which is the bliss of solitude ;
 And then my heart with pleasure fills,
 And dances with the daffodils.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

From "Endymion."

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever,
 Its loveliness increases, it will never
 Pass into nothingness.
 In spite of all,
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall



From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep ; and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in.

JOHN KEATS.

Ode to the Daffodil.

O LOVE-STAR of the unbeloved March,
When, cold and shrill,
Forth flows beneath a low, dim-lighted arch
The wind that beats sharp crag and barren hill,
And keeps unfilmed the lately torpid till !

A week o'er
Thou com'st thy soul is round us everywhere ;
And many an auspice, many an omen,
Whispers, scarce noted, thou art coming.
Huge, cloudlike trees grow dense with sprit and
buds
And cast a shapelier gloom o'er freshening ass.
And through the fringe of ragged woods
More shrouded sunbeams pass.
Fresh shoots conceal the pollard's spike
The driving rack outbraving ;
The hedge swells large by ditch and dike ;
And all the uncoloured world is like
A shadow-lined engraving.

Herald and harbinger ! with thee
Begins the year's great jubilee !

Of her solemnities sublime
(A sacristan whose gusty taper
Flashes through earliest morning vapour),

Thou ring'st dark nocturns and dim prime.
Birds that have yet no heart for song

Gain strength with thee to twitter ;
And, warm at last, where hollies throng,
The mirrored sunbeams glitter.

With silk the osier plumes her tendrils thin :
Sweet blasts, though keen as sweet, the blue lake
wrinkle ;
And buds on leafless boughs begin
Against gray skies to twinkle.

To thee belongs

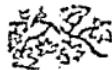
A pathos drowned in later scents and songs !
Thou com'st when first the Spring

On Winter's verge encroaches ;
When gifts that speed on wounded wing
Meet little save reproaches !

Thou com'st when blossoms blighted,
Retracted sweets, and ditty,
From suppliants oft deceived and spited
More anger draw than pity !



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Thee the old shepherd, on the bleak hill-side,
Far distant eyeing leans upon his staff
Till from his cheek the wind-brushed tear is dried :
In thee he spells his boyhood's epitaph.
To thee belongs the youngling of the flock,
When first it lies, close-huddled from the cold,
Between the sheltering rock
And gorse-bush slowly overcrept with gold.

Thou laugh'st, bold outcast bright as brave,
When the wood bellows, and the cave,
And leagues inland is heard the wave !
Hating the dainty and the fine
As sings the blackbird thou dost shine !
Thou com'st while yet on mountain lawns high up
Lurks the last snow-wreath : by the berried breer
While yet the black spring in its craggy cup
No music makes or charms no listening ear.
Thou com'st while from the oak stock or red beech
Dead Autumn scoffs young Spring with splenetic
speech ;
When in her vidual chastity the Year
With frozen memories of the sacred past
Her doors and heart makes fast,
And loves no flower save those that deck the bier :—
Ere yet the blossomed sycamore
With golden surf is curdled o'er ;



Ere yet the birch against the blue
Her silken tissue weaves anew.
Thou com'st while, meteor like 'mid fens, the weed
Swims, wan in light; while sleet-showers whitening
glare;—
Weeks ere by river brims, new furred, the reed
Leans its green javelin level in the air.

Child of the strong and strenuous East!
Now scattered wide o'er dusk hill bases,
Now massed in broad, illuminate spaces;—
Torchbearer at a wedding feast
Whereof thou mayst not be partaker,
But mime at most, and merry maker;—
Phosphor of an ungrateful sun
That rises but to bid thy lamp begone:—

Farewell! I saw
Writ large on woods and lawns to day that Law
Which back remands thy race and thee,
To hero-haunted shades of dark Persephone.
To-day the Spring has pledged her marriage vow:
Her voice, late tremulous, strong has grown and
steady:
To-day the Spring is crowned a queen: but thou
Thy Winter hast already!
Take my song's blessing, and depart,
Type of true service—unrequited heart.



To a Mountain Daisy.

WEE, modest, crimson tipped flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour,

For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem.

To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas ! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie Lark, companion meet !
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet !
Wi' spreckl'd breast,
When upward springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth,
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shel'ring woods and wa's maun shield,
But thou, beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane
Adorns the histie stubble field
Unseen, alone



There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head

In humble guise;

But now the share uptears thy bed

And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless Maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd

And guileless trust,

Till she, like thee, all so'l'd, is laid

Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd.
Unskilful he to note the card

Of prudent lore,

Till billows rage, and gales blow hard

And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By humble pride or cunning driv'n

To mis'ry's brink,

Till wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,

He, ruin'd, sink!



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date ;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
 Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight
 Shall be thy doom.

ROBERT BURNS.

To the Daisy.

BRIGH'T Flower! whose home is everywhere,
 Bold in maternal Nature's care,
And all the long year through the heir
 Of joy or sorrow—
Methinks that there abides in thee
 Some concord with humanity,
Given to no other flower I see
 The forest thorough !

Is it that Man is soon deprest ?
A thoughtless Thing ! who, once unblest,
Does little on his memory rest,
 Or on his reason,
And Thou would'st teach him how to find
 A shelter under every wind,
A hope for times that are unkind
 And every season ?



Thou wander'st the wide world about,
Uncheck'd by pride or scrupulous doubt,
With friends to greet thee, or without,
 Yet pleased and willing ;
Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
And all things suffering from all,
Thy function apostolical
 In peace fulfilling.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

To the Daisy.

WITH little here to do or see
 Of things that in the great world be,
Daisy ! again I talk to thee,
 For thou art worthy,
Thou unassuming Common-place
Of Nature, with that homely face,
And yet with something of a grace
 Which Love me for thee !

Oft on the dappled tur. ease
I sit, and play with simi. es.
Loose types of things through all degrees,
 Thoughts of thy raising :



FLOWER AND LEAF.



And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame
As is the humour of the game,
While I am gazing.

A nun demure of lowly port ,
Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations ;
A queen in crown of rubies drest ,
A starveling in a scanty vest ;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
Thy appellations

A little cyclops, with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy,
That thought comes next—and instantly
The freak is over,
The shape will vanish—and behold
A silver shield with boss of gold,
That spreads itself some faery bold
In fight to cover !

I see thee glittering from afar—
And then thou art a pretty star ;
Not quite so fair as many are
In heaven above thee !



Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest ;—
May peace come never to his nest
Who shall reprove thee !

Bright *Flower* ! for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
Sweet silent creature !
That'breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature !

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

A Field Flower.

ON FINDING ONE IN FULL BLOOM, ON CHRISTMAS
DAY, 1803.

THERE is a flower, a little flower,
With silver crest and golden eye,
That welcomes every changing hour,
And weathers every sky.

The prouder beauties of the field
In gay but quick succession shine,
Race after race their honours yield,
They flourish and decline.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



But this small flower, to Nature dear,
While moons and stars their courses run,
Wreathes the whole circle of the year,
Companion of the sun.

It smiles upon the lap of May,
'To sultry August spreads its charms,
Lights pale October on his way,
And twines December's arms.

The purple heath and golden broom,
On moory mountains catch the gale,
O'er lawns the lily sheds perfume,
The violet in the vale.

But this bold floweret climbs the hill,
Hides in the forest, haunts the glen,
Plays on the margin of the rill,
Peeps round the fox's den.

Within the garden's cultured round
It shares the sweet carnation's bed ;
And blooms on consecrated ground
In honour of the dead.

The lambkin crops its crimson gem,
The wild-bee murmurs on its breast,
The blue-fly bends its pensile stem,
Light o'er the sky-lark's nest.



"Tis Flora's page :—in every place,
In every season fresh and fair,
It opens with perennial grace,
And blossoms everywhere.

On waste and woodland, rock and plain,
Its humble buds unheeded rise ;
The Rose has but a summer reign,
The DAISY never dies.

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

Flowers for the Heart.

FLOWERS ! winter flowers !—the child is dead,
The mother cannot speak ;
O softly couch his little head,
Or Mary's heart will break !
Amid those curls of flaxen hair
This pale pink ribbon twine,
And on the little bosom there
Place this wan lock of mine.
How like a form in cold white stone,
The coffin'd infant lies !
Look, Mother, on thy little one !
And tears will fill thine eyes.



FLOWER AND LEAF.

She cannot weep—more faint she grows,
More deadly pale and still :
Flowers ! oh a flower ! a winter rose,
That tiny hand to fill.
Go, search the fields ! the lichen wet
Bends o'er th' unsailing well ;
Beneath the furrow lingers yet
The scarlet pimpernel.
Peeps not a snowdrop in the bower,
Where never froze the spring ?
A daisy ? Ah ! bring childhood's flower !
The half-blown daisy bring !
Yes, lay the daisy's little head
Beside the little cheek ;
O haste ! the last of five is dead !
The childless cannot speak !

EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

From "Sonnet."

THE little daisy keeps its wonted pace,
Ere March by April gets disarm'd of snow
A look of joy opes on its smiling face,
Turn'd to that Power that suffers it to blow.

JOHN CLARE.



From "The Daisy."

SWEET are the Daisies that begem
The blue fields of the sky,
Beheld by all, and everywhere,
Bright prototypes on high :—
Bloom on, then, unpretending flower !
And to the waverer be
An emblem of St Paul's content,
St Stephen's constancy.

— D. M. MOIR.

From "God is Everywhere."

ATRODDEN Daisy, from the sward,
With tearful eye I took,
And on its ruin'd glories I,
With moving heart, did look ;
For crush'd and broken though it was,
That little flower was fair ;
And oh ! I loved the dying bud—
For God was there !

ROBERT NICOLL.



The Daisy.

WHEN first the teeming world was rise
With beauty, plenty, light, and life ;
When Nature's Godhead, great and wise,
Had look'd upon the earth and skies,
And "saw all good" that he had done,
From glow-worm's spark to rolling sun :
When every tribe, and every race,
Seem'd well contented with their place ;
One little voice alone was heard
To utter a complaining word.

Creation's Spirit, ever just,
Turn'd to the murmuring thing of dust—
"Stand forth," he said, "and tremble not,
Relate the evil of thy lot,
Low as thou art, thou shalt be heard,—
Stand forth, thou need'st not fear my word."

A tiny flower from the shade.
Whose head scarce topp'd the emerald blade
Came with a sad and plaintive tone
And thus address'd the Mighty One :



"Oh ! gaze, Creator, gaze around,
And see what brilliant tints abound.
The poppy, with its flaming breast,
Outshines the crimson of the West ;
The speedwell, with its azure hue,
Peeps out and mocks the southern blue ;
The foxglove shakes its ruby bells ;
With purple pride the orchis swells ;
The dog-rose, with its dewy charms,
Can lure the wild bee to its arms ;
The cornflower and the asphodel
Are homes where golden moths will dwell ;

The primrose glitters in the beam,
And pearly lily gems the stream ;
The violet in its regal dress
Wins the young zephyr's soft caress ;
The pimpernel, with scarlet star,
Spangles the hill-top—trailing far :
All, all beside, are seen to wear
Garbs richly gay, or sweetly fair ;
The meanest of my kindred shine
With hues of rarer tint than mine.
Oh ! who will praise, or who will seek
My simple form and scentless cheek ?"

"Hush !" said the Spirit, "well I know
Thou hast no gaudy leaves to show ; ,



FLOWER AND LEAF.

But listen ! Learn what thou wilt be :
Then change with any flower or tree.

Thou shalt become a favour'd thing
With those who sweep the burning string ;
The lyre shall echo for thy sake,
That brighter bloom shall fail to wake.
A future son of Song and Fame
Shall fling a halo round thy name ;
The inspiration of thy flower
Shall kindle an immortal hour ;
And the 'poor Daisy' in his way
Shall mingle with the Poet's lay.
Thou shalt be bound by mystic ties
To guileless souls and infant eyes ;
The lisping ones shall clutch thy stem,
As though thy blossom were a gem.
In spring-time troops of them shall come
To hail thee in thy fresh green home ;
And loudly glad with bounding heart,
Tell all the world how dear thou art.
This, lowly Daisy, is thy lot,
Say, canst thou be content, or not?"

The little floweret "colour'd up"
Till rosy redness fringed its cup ;
And never has it lost the flush
Of pride and joy that call'd the blush.



“Forgive me, mighty Lord,” it cried ;
“Creation’s realm, however wide,
Holds nought for which I’d change my fate,
And yield my blest, though humble state.
The mountain pine may rear its head.
The forest oak may nobly spread ;
The rose may bloom, the jasmine breathe,
The vine and eglantine may wreath ;
Of all that springs beneath the sun,
I, the ‘poor Daisy’ envy none :
For none can greater homage prove
Than Minstrel’s song and Childhood’s love.”

ELIZA COOK.

From “Daisies.”

STAR of our childhood pure, ere yet we had
Outgrown the lily, all our thoughts as white
As when your round and happy faces bide
“Good morning” to us, brothers in delight,
From morn till shut of day.

Up with the day our paths of toil ye grace ;
Still turning to the light, your honest eye
Bids us be plain and high as Truth’s own face,
And with white deeds and sunbright chastity
Our golden manhood crown.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



And all the footprints of our joy ye set
In orient pearls, and on our griefs ye shine
A star of hope upon our eyelids wet,
Just touched with some new rose of dawn divine,
New life will make our own.

And when old age has bowed us and we look
Up to the stars no more, but track the dust,
Still ye forsake us not ; by field and brook
Our childhood's star shines back old love and trust
And lights our worn feet home.

Nor even then when the last prayer is said,
And the last lingering footstep dies away,
Do ye forsake the place where Love is laid,
But o'er his grave keep humble watch each day,
Till the great dawning comes.

Angel or flower shall I call you, sweets?
Who share the long lone watchings of the heart,
Trimming your deathless lamps in winter sleet
And summer suns with the wise virgins' art,
To keep Love's vigils there.

Till looking back from other worlds of light,
Our earth may show, like you, a mild white star,
And night and death, and tempest in the night,
Be seen a wandering spot rose-fringed afar,
With morn and evening fair.

ELICE HOPKINS.



From "Lady Laura."

BRIGHT-HEARTED with a golden dream
The little daisy lifts its head ;
Its wee lips glister wet and red ;
Its smile is as a thankful hymn.

GERALD MASSEY.

From "The Daisy."

WHAT more? we took our last adieu,
And up the snowy Splügen drew,
But ere we reach'd the highest summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy.

O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer across the sea :

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold :

Yet here to-night in this dark city,
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
This nursling of another sky

Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by :



FLOWER AND LEAF.



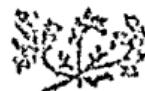
And I forgot the clouded Forth
The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth,
The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
Perchance, to dream you still beside me,
My fancy fled to the South again.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

To the Dandelion.

DEAR common flower, that grow'st beside
the way,
Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
First pledge of blithesome May,
Which children pluck, and, full of pride, uphold,
High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that they
An Eldorado in the grass have found,
Which not the rich earth's ample round
May match in wealth—thou art more dear to me
Than all the prouder summer-blooms may be.



Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Spanish prow
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,

Nor wrinkled the lean brow
Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;

'Tis the spring's largess, which she scatters now
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,

'Though most hearts never understand
To take it as God's value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and my Italy;
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;

The eyes thou givest me
Are in the heart, and heed not space or time:

Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed bee
Feels a more summer-like warm ravishment

In the white lily's breezy tent,
His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first
From the dark green thy yellow circles burst.

Then think I of deep shadows on the grass—
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,

Where, as the breezes pass,
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways—

Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,
Or whiten in the wind—of waters blue

That from the distance sparkle through



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Some woodland gap—and of a sky above,
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb doth
move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are linked with
thee;
The sight of thee calls back the Robin's song,
Who, from the dark old tree
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,
And I, secure in childish piety,
Listened as if I heard an Angel sing
With news from Heaven, which he could
bring
Fresh every day to my untainted ears,
When birds and flowers and I were happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth Nature seem,
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!
Thou teachest me to deem
More sacredly of every human heart,
Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam
Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret show,
Did we but pay the love we owe,
And with a child's undoubting wisdom look
On all these living pages of God's book.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL



On the Datura Arborea.

MAJESTIC plant! such fairy dreams as lie
Nursed, where the bee sucks in the cowslip's
bell,

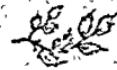
Are not *thy* train:—those flowers of vase-like swell
Clear, large, with dewy moonlight fill'd from high,
And in their monumental purity
Serenely drooping, round thee seem to draw
Visions link'd strangely with that silent awe
Which broods o'er sculpture's works.—A meet ally
For those heroic forms, the simply grand
Art thou: and worthy, carved by plastic hand,
Above some kingly poet's tomb to shine
In spotless marble; honouring one, whose strain
Soar'd upon wings of thought that knew no stain
Free through the starry heavens of truth divine.

FELICIA D. HEMANS.

The Sprig of Eglantine.

FROM this bleeding hand of mine,
Take this sprig of Eglantine:
Which, though sweet unto your smell
Yet the fretful briar will tell,
He who plucks the sweets, shall prove
Many thorns to be in love.

ROBERT HERRICK.



Frail Flowers.

PLUCK not the eglantine,
But leave it there to bloom through sun and shade.

Wilt call it thine?

Poor eglantine!

Then look to see it fade!

Ah, grasp not earth's delight,
But only take its fragrance, passing by.

Our paths are bright

Through earth's delight,

Which in our grasp would die!

ANNE EVANS.

Sweet Eglantine.

SWEET Eglantine, whose fragrance rare
Like incense loads the evening air,
How closely do thy arms entwine
This forest oak, and like the vine,
Enrich the boughs thy weight that bear.

Such lowly daring I would share,
And hang upon the Strong my care;
And imitate thy instinct fine,

Sweet Eglantine.

And there is One who loves to wear
Whatever flowers of praise and prayer

Crown this dependent life of mine ;
And so I grasp His strength Divine,
C inging like thee, as on I fare,

Sweet Eglantine.

RICHARD WILTON

The Elm and the Robin.

A ROBIN perched upon a bough
Puffed out his ruddy breast—
Says he, “ Of every tree, I vow,
I love this Elm the best.

How high she rears herself in air,
How grand her summer green,
How proud in winter, stript and bare,—
My noble forest queen ! ”

The merry woodman whirls his axe,
The Elm-tree bows her head,
Her last strong buttress yields and cracks—
She falls, for ever dead.



The Robin nimbly flutters down,
Unmournful at her fate,
And peers through all her shattered crown
For flies to feast his mate.

EARL OF SOUTHESK

The Evening Primrose.

FAIR flower, that shun'st the glare of day,
Yet lov'st to open, meekly bold,
To evening's hues of sober gray,
Thy cup of paley gold ;

Bethink the offering owing long
To thee, and to this pensive hour,
Of one brief tributary song,
Though transient as thy flower.

I love to watch, at silent eve,
Thy scattered blossoms' lonely light,
And have my inmost heart receive
The influence of that sight.

I love at such an hour to mark
Their beauty greet the night-breeze child.
And shine, 'mid shadows gathering dark.
The garden's glory still.



INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.

For such, 'tis sweet to think the while,
When cares and griefs the breast invade,
Is friendship's animating smile
In sorrow's dark'ning shade.

Thus it bursts forth, like thy pale cup,
Glist'ning amid its dewy tears,
And bears the sinking spirit up
Amid its chilling fears.

But still more animating far,
If meek Religion's eye may trace,
Even in thy glimmering earth-born star,
The holier hope of Grace.

The hope, that as thy beauteous bloom
Expands to glad the close of day,
So through the shadows of the tomb
May break forth Mercy's ray.

BERNARD BARTON.

Euphrasia Officinalis or Eye-bright.

THERE is a flower, a tiny flower ;
Its hue is white, but close within't
There is a spot of golden tint :
Therein abides a wondrous juice,
That hath, for such as know its use,
A sweet and holy power.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



It is the little Euphrasy,
Which you no doubt have often seen
'Mid the tall grass of meadow green ;
But never deem'd so wee a wight
Endow'd with medicinal might
To clear the darkened eye.

And maybe now it hath no more
The virtue which the kindly fays
Bestow'd in fancy's holy days ;
Yet still the gold-eyed weedie springs,
To show how pretty little things
Were hallow'd long of yore.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

A Young Fir-Wood.

THESE little firs to day are things
To clasp into a giant's cap,
Or fans to suit his lady's lap.
From many winters many springs
Shall cherish them in strength and sap,
Till they be marked upon the map,
A wood for the wind's wanderings.



All seed is in the sower's hands :
And what at first was trained to spread
Its shelter for some single head,—
Yea, even such fellowship of wands,—
May hide the sunset, and the shade
Of its great multitude be laid
Upon the earth and elder sands.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

To the Furze Bush.

LET Burns and old Chaucer unite
The praise of the Daisy to sing,—
Let Wordsworth of Celandine write,
And crown her the Queen of the Spring ;
The Hyacinth's classical fame
Let Milton embalm in his verse ;
Be mine the glad task to proclaim
The charms of untrumpeted Furze !

Of all other bloom when bereft,
And Sol wears his wintery screen,
Thy sunshining blossoms are left
To light up the common and green.
O why should they envy the peer
His perfume of spices and myrrhs,
When the poorest their senses may cheer
With incense diffused from the Furze ?



FLOWER AND LEAF.



It is bristled with thorns, I confess ;
But so is the much flatter'd Rose :
Is the sweet-briar lauded the less
Because amid prickles it grows ?
'Twere to cut off an epigram's point,
Or disfurnish a knight of his spurs,
If we foolishly wish'd to disjoint
Its arms from the lance-bearing Furze.

Ye dabblers in mines, who would clutch
The wealth which their bowels enfold ,
See ! Nature, with Midas-like touch,
Here turns a whole common to gold ;
No niggard is she to the poor,
But distributes whatever is hers,
And the wayfaring beggar is sure
Of a tribute of gold from the Furze.

Ye worldlings ! learn hence to divide
Your wealth with the children of want,
Nor scorn, in your fortune and pride,
To be taught by the commonest plant.
If the wisest new wisdom may draw
From things humble, as reason avers,
We too may receive Heaven's law,
And beneficence learn from the Furze.

HORACE SMITH.



The Gentianella.

IN LEAF.

GREEN thou art, obscurely green,
Meanest plant among the mean !

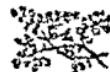
From the dust I took my birth :
Thou, too, art a child of earth ;
I aspire not to be great ;
Scorn not thou my low estate ;
Time will come when thou shalt see
Honour crown humility,
Beauty set her seal on me.

IN FLOWER.

Blue thou art, intensely blue,
Flower, whence came thy dazzling hue ?

When I open'd first mine eye,
Upward glancing to the sky,
Straightway from the firmament
Was the sapphire brilliance sent.
Brighter glory wouldest thou share,
Do what I did—look up *there*,
What I could not,—look with prayer.

JAMES MONTGOMERY.



To the Fringed Gentian.

THOU blossom bright with autumn dew,
And coloured with the heaven's own blue,
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night.

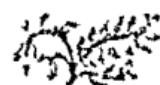
Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown,
And frosts and shortening days portend,
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

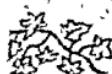


Lessons from the Gorse.

MOUNTAIN gorses, ever-golden,
Cankered not the whole year long !
Do ye teach us to be strong,
Howsoever pricked and holden
Like your thorny blooms, and so
Trodden on by rain and snow,
Up the hill side of this life, as bleak as where ye grow.

Mountain blossoms, shining blossoms,
Do ye teach us to be glad
When no summer can be had,
Blooming in our inward bosoms ?
Ye, whom God preserveth still,
Set as lights upon a hill,
Tokens to a wintry earth, that Beauty liveth still !

Mountain gorses, do ye teach us
From that academic chair
Canopied with azure air,
That the wisest word man reaches
Is the humblest he can speak ?
Ye, who live on mountain peak
Yet live low along the ground, beside the grasses
meek !



Mountain gorses, since Linnæus
Knelt beside you on the sod,
For your beauty thanking God,—
For your teaching, you should see us
Bowing in prostration new !
Whence arisen,—if one or two
Drops be on our cheeks—O world! they are not tears
but dew.

E. B. BROWNING.

Grass of Parnassus.

O HAPPY singers, and happy song,
That had never a pang of birth,
When first in the human heart grew strong
Earth, and the wonder of Earth !

Had I, too, lived when the Earth was young,
Earth that is now so old,—
When Faith and Fancy were of one tongue,
That are aliens now, and cold ;

Then half of fancy, and half of faith,
I had woven, fair flower, for thee
A dream-like legend of love and death,
To match thy purity.

For not the drooping flower by the stream,
Nor the flower that is written with woe,
To the Earth has lent a lovelier gleam,
To the heart a holier glow.

But now I should mock thy loveliness,
Or do thee despite, fair flower,
By a fable fashioned in antique dress,
As an actor tricked for an hour.

Rather I gather thee reverently
From thy place in the rush-grown sod,
And think, frail flower, were it only for thee,
I should know that God is God !

For if haply a power that was not divine,
Or the forces of earth or air,
Could have moulded matter to life like mine,
Or made thee a form so fair ;

Yet only the God whom we love as Love
Could so have made me and thee,
That thou by thy simple beauty canst move
Such a world of love in me.



Thaemony.

A LITTLE dust the summer breeze
Had sifted up within a cleft,
A slanted raindrop from the trees,
A tiny seed by chance airs left—
It was enough ; the seedling grew,
And from the barren rock-heart drew
Her dimpled leaf and tender bud,
And dews that did the bare rock stud,
And crowned at length her simple head
With utter sweetness, breathed afar,
And burning like a dusky star—
Sweetness upon so little fed,
Ah me ! ah me !
And yet hearts go uncomforted.

For hearts, dear Love, such seedlings are,
That need so little, ah, so less
Than little on this earth, to bear
The sun-sweet blossom, happiness ;
And sing—those dying hearts that come
To go—their swan-song flying home.
A touch, a tender tone—no more—
A face that lingers by the door
To turn and smile, a fond word said,
A kiss—these things make heaven ; and yet
We do neglect, refuse, forget,



To give that little, ere 'tis fled,

 Ah me ! ah me !

And sad hearts go uncomforted

I asked of thee but little, nay,

Not for the golden fruit thy bough

Ripens for thee and thine who day

 By day beneath thy shadow grow ,

Only for what, from that full store,

Had made me rich, nor left thee poor,

A drift of blossom, needed not

For fruit, yet blessing some dim spot.

A touch, a tender word soon said,

Fond tones that seem our Dead again

Come back after long years of pain,

 Lonely, for these my sick heart bled—

 Ah me ! ah me !

Sad hearts that go uncomforted.

ELICE HOPKINS

The Hawthorn and the Wild Rose.

I LEARNT a lesson from the flowers to-day :—

As o'er the fading hawthorn-blooms I sighed,

Whose petals fair lay scattered far and wide ;

Lo, suddenly upon a dancing spray

I saw the first wild-roses clustered gay.



But in his eyes a mist unwonted rises,
And for a moment clear
Some sweet home face his foolish thought surprises
And passes in a tear,—

Some boyish vision of his Eastern village,
Of uneventful toil,
Where golden harvests followed quiet tillage
Above a peaceful soil.

One moment only, for the pick, uplifting,
Through root and fibre cleaves,
And on the muddy current slowly drifting
Are swept thy bruised leaves.

And yet, O poet, in thy homely fashion,
Thy work thou dost fulfil,
For on the turbid current of his passion
Thy face is shining still !

BRET HARTE.

The Holly Tree.

O READER ! hast thou ever stood to see
The Holly Tree ?
The eye that contemplates it well perceives
Its glossy leaves



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Order'd by an intelligence so wise,
As might confound the atheist's sophistries.

Below, a circling fence, its leaves are seen
Wrinkled and keen,
No grazing cattle through their prickly round
Can reach to wound ;
But, as they grow where nothing is to fear,
Smooth and unarm'd the pointless leaves appear.

I love to view these things with curious eyes,
And moralize :
And in this wisdom of the Holly Tree
Can emblems see,
Wherewith perchance to make a pleasant rhyme.
One which may profit in the after time.

Thus, though abroad perchance I might appear
Harsh and austere ;
To those who on my leisure would intrude,
Reserved and rude ;—
Gentle at home amid my friends I'd be,
Like the high leaves upon the Holly Tree.

And should my youth, as youth is apt I know,
Some harshness show,
All vain asperities I day by day
Would wear away,



INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.



Till the smooth temper of my age should be
Like the high leaves upon the Holly Tree.

And as when all the summer trees are seen
So bright and green,

The Holly leaves a sober hue display
Less bright than they ;

But when the bare and wintry woods we see,
What then so cheerful as the Holly Tree ?

So serious should my youth appear among
The thoughtless throng ;

So would I seem amid the young and gay
More grave than they ;

That in my age as cheerful I might be
As the green winter of the Holly Tree.

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

Song.

NO—no—my love is no rose
That only in sunshine buds and grows,
And but to blue skies will its blooms enclose ;
That withers away
In an autumn day
And dies in a dream of drifting snows—
No—no—my love is no rose.



FLOWER AND LEAF



No—no—my love is no rose—
My love is the Holly that ever is green
Whether breezes are balmy or blasts are keen,
 The same that is still
 In days sullen and chill
As when snowed with blossom the orchards are seen

W. C. BENNETT.

The Holly's Teaching.

RUSTED are the golden leaves,
 Gone the blossoms trooping,
Gone the sparrows from the eaves,
 Rooks from elm-tops swooping:
Gleamy morns bring gloomy days,
 To lurid sunsets tending;
Snow-drifts whiten woods and ways,—
 So the year is ending

But though winds despoil, and snows
 Hill and hollow deaden,
Wide the beacon Holly glows,
 Bright its berries redder;
Clear as with outspoken word
 Hopeful comfort lending:
“Though the years die, hath the Lord
 Of the dead years ending?”

WILLIAM SAWYER.

The Holly.

TIS a brave tree. While round its boughs in vain
The waiting wind of January bites and girds,
It holds the clusters of its crimson grain,
A winter pasture for the shivering birds.
Oh patient holly, that the children love,
No need for thee of smooth blue skies above :
Oh green strong holly, shine amid the frost,
Thou dost not lose one leaf for sunshine lost.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

From "Much Ado About Nothing."

THE pleached bower,
Where honeysuckles, ripened by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter ; like favourites,
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride
Against that power that bred it.

SHAKESPEARE.

Honeysuckle.

STOP ! taste the balmy essence of this flower,
That fondly twines about the dark-green fir ;
The air is sweet, and, like a mild-eyed saint,
It liveth doing good. The balmy gale



Far wafts its odours to the lowly door
Of yon small cot thatched with the dying heath,
And the old dame doth bless the laden wind.
I do not think that e'er a tender eye
Looked on thee but with love,—that e'er a tongue
Spoke of thee but with blessings and with praise.
Thy lean red shanks cling round the dusty trunk,
And send their white shoots through the brown rough
bark,
So true, so fond and frail-like that when one
Looks on thee, his mind's eye sees round God's
throne
White spirits breathing hymns and fed with love.
Ye sweet, sweet flowers ! ye must have mutual love,
For when one stalk, with its own beauty, droops,
With oily leaves and breathing blossoms heavy,
The others haste their sister to upraise,
And, winding round it with affection's grasp,
Lift it from off the earth's dark dreaded breast
How many nosegays have I often culled
Of thee, fair guiltless thief, for even thy name
Tells how thou *sucklest* nature's *honeyed* sweets,
And leav'st her less wherewith to bless the rest.
Thou art not *very* beauteous ; many flowers,
With high-fringed crests and gaudy-spotted leaves,
Outstrip thy homely dress ; but tell me one
That blesseth ether with more fragrant smell ?
'Tis ever thus. Furred robes and shining silks.



Oft hide a poppy's smell—a dastard mind ;
And homely garments oft adorn a breast
That heaves at pity's tale and tale of wrong,
And, known by none, yet is a fiend to all.

DAVID GRAY.

The Honeysuckle.

I PLUCKED a honeysuckle where
The hedge on high is quick with thorn,
And climbing for the prize, was torn,
And souled my feet in quag-water ;
And by the thorns and by the wind
The blossom that I took was thinn'd,
And yet I found it sweet and fair.

Thence to a richer growth I came,
Where, nursed in mellow intercourse,
The honeysuckles sprang by scores,
Not harried like my single stem,
All virgin lamps of scent and dew.
So from my hand that first I threw,
Yet plucked not any more of them.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSLI.



From "The Flower and the Leaf."

L AUREL is the sign of labour crown'd,
Which bears the bitter blast, nor shak'n falls
to ground :

From winter winds it suffers no decay,
For ever fresh and fair, and every month is May.
E'en when the vital sap retreats below,
E'en when the hoary head is hid in snow,
The life is in the leaf, and still between
The fits of falling snow appears the streaky green.
Not so the flower, which lasts for little space,
A short liv'd good, and an uncertain grace ;

This way and that the feeble stem is driven,
Weak to sustain the storms and injuries of heaven.
Propp'd by the spring, it lifts aloft the head,
But of a sickly beauty, soon to shed ;
In summer living, and in winter dead.
For things of tender kind, for pleasure made,
Shoot up with swift increase, and sudden are decay'd.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (*Mod. by Dryden.*)

From Sonnet xciv.

FOR sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds—
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

SHAKESPEARE.



“From Underwoods.”

TIS not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make men better be ;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sear.

A lily of a day,
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night ;
It was the plant, and flower of light.
In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures, life may perfect be.

BEN JONSON.

From “Solomon.”

TAKE but the humblest lily of the field ;
And if our pride will to our reason yield,
It must by sure comparisons be shown
That on the regal seat great David's son,
Array'd in all his robes, and types of power,
Shines with less glory than that simple flower.

MATTHEW PRIOR.

To the Lily.

SOFT silken flower ! that in the dewy vale
Unfold'st thy modest beauties to the morn,



FLOWER AND LEAF.



And breath'st thy fragrance on her wandering gale,
O'er earth's green fields and shadowy valley borne;

When day has closed his dazzling eye,
And dying gales sink soft away ;
When eve steals down the western sky,
And mountains, woods, and vales decay ;

Thy tender cups, that graceful swell,
Droop sad beneath her chilly dew ;
Thy odours seek their silken cell,
And twilight veils their languid hue.

But soon, fair flower ! the morn shall rise,
And rear again thy pensive head ;
Again unveil thy snowy dyes,
Again thy velvet foliage spread.

Sweet child of spring ! like thee, in sorrow's shade,
Full oft I mourn in tears and droop forlorn ;
And O ! like thine, may light my glooms pervade,
And sorrow fly, before joy's shining morn !

ANNE RADCLIFFE.

From "The British Months."

FAIR flower, that oft in lowly glade
Dost hide beneath the greenwood shade



Than whom the vernal gale
None fairer wakes on bank or spray,
Our England's Lily of the May,
Our Lily of the Vale!

What though nor care nor art be thine,
The loom to ply, the thread to twine;
Yet, born to bloom and fade,
Thee, too, a lovelier robe arrays,
Than e'er in Israel's brightest days
Her wealthiest king array'd.

BISHOP MANT.

The Lily of the Valley.

WHITE bud, that in meek beauty so dost
lean
Thy cloister'd cheek as pale as moonlight snow,
Thou seem'st beneath thy huge, high leaf of green
An Eremitie beneath his mountain brow.

White bud! thou'rt emblem of a lovelier thing,
The broken spirit that its anguish bears
To silent shades, and there sits offering
To Heaven the holy fragrance of its tears.

GEORGE CROLY.



Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow."—

ST. MATTHEW VI. 23.

SWEET nurslings of the vernal skies,
Bath'd in soft airs, and fed with dew,
What more than magic in you lies,
To fill the heart's fond view?
In childhood's sports, companions gay,
In sorrow, on Life's downward way,
How soothing! in our last decay
Memorials prompt and true.

Relics ye are of Eden's bowers,
As pure, as fragrant, and as fair,
As when ye crown'd the sunshine hours
Of happy wanderers there.
Fall'n all beside—the world of life,
How is it stain'd with fear and strife!
In Reason's world what storms are rife,
What passions range and glare!

But cheerful and unchanged the while
Your first and perfect form ye show,
The same that won Eve's matron smile
In the world's opening glow.



INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.



The stars of heaven a course are taught
Too high above our human thought ;
Ye may be found if ye are sought,
And as we gaze, we know.

Ye dwell beside our paths and homes,
Our paths of sin, our homes of sorrow,
And guilty man, where'er he roams,
Your innocent mirth may borrow.
The birds of air before us fleet,
They cannot brook our shame to meet—
But we may taste your solace sweet
And come again to-morrow.

Ye fearless in your nests abide—
Nor may we scorn, too proudly wise,
Your silent lessons, undescried
By all but lowly eyes :
For ye could draw th' admiring gaze
Of Him who worlds and hearts surveys :
Your order wild, your fragrant maze,
He taught us how to prize.

Ye felt your Maker's smile that hour
As when He paus'd and own'd you good ;
His blessing on earth's primal bower,
Ye felt it all renew'd.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



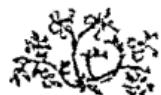
What care ye now, if winter's storm
Sweep ruthless o'er each silken form?
Christ's blessing at your heart is warm,
Ye fear no vexing mood.

Alas! of thousand bosoms kind,
That daily court you and caress,
How few the happy secret find
Of your calm loveliness!
"Live for to-day! to-morrow's light
To-morrow's cares shall bring to sight,
Go sleep like closing flowers at night,
And Heaven thy morn will bless."

JOHN KEBLE.

The Lilies of the Field.

FLOWERS! when the Saviour's calm benignant
eye
Fell on your gentle beauty—when from you
That heavenly lesson for all hearts he drew,
Eternal, universal, as the sky—
Then, in the bosom of your purity,
A voice He set, as in a temple-shrine,
That life's quick travellers ne'er might pass you by,
Unwarn'd of that sweet oracle divine.



And though too oft its low, celestial sound,
By the harsh notes of work-day Care is drown'd,
And the loud steps of vain unlistening Haste,
Yet, the great ocean hath no tone of power
Mightier to reach the soul, in thought's hush'd hour,
Than yours, ye Lilies ! chosen thus and graced !

FELICIA D. HEMANS.

From "A Lily and a Lute."

NAY ! but thou a spirit art ;
Men shall take thee in the mart
For the ghost of their best thought
Raised at noon, and near them brought ;
Or the prayers they made last night,
Set before them all in white.

JEAN INGFLOW.

From "Consider."

CONSIDER

The lilies of the field whose bloom is brief ;—
We are as they,
Like them we fade away
As doth a leaf.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Consider
The lilies that do neither spin nor toil,
Yet are most fair:—
What profits all this care
And all this toil?

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

The Marigold.

WHEN with serious musing I behold
The grateful and obsequious Marigold,
How duly every mornin's she displays
Her open breast when Phoebus spreads his rays;
How she observes him in his daily walk,
Still bending towards him her small slender stalk;
How when he down declines she droops and mourns,
Bed-wed, as 'were, with tears till he returns;
And how she tells her flowers when he is gone—
When 'tis I meditate, methinks the flowers
Have spirits far more generous than we;
And 'tis an fair example to devise
The terrible fancies and idiosyncrasies
Wherewith we count the earthly things below,
—Wherewith not the service we factor

GEORGE WITHERS

A Gethsemane Marigold.

A BEE crept round my sun-like marigold
And sucked the nectar from that Eastern bloom,
Whose shining ancestry did once illumine
The sacred olive-garden—where of old
Dark clouds of sorrow o'er the Saviour rolled.
How strange this honied brightness to that gloom,
That awful shadow of the Cross and tomb,
That cup of gall and bitterness untold.
O Lord of love, blest Oriental Flower,
Casting a gleam on this far western isle,
Fain would I seek Thy face from hour to hour,
To taste Thy sweetness and to feel Thy smile,—
My comfort here, and Plant of rare renown,
My glory yonder, and my golden crown.

RICHARD WILTON.

The May Flowers.

SAD May flowers! watched by winter stars
And nursed by winter gales,
With petals of the sleeted spars,
And leaves of frozen sails!



FLOWER AND LEAF.



What had she in those dreary hours,
Within her ice-rimmed bay,
In common with the wild wood flowers,
The first sweet smiles of May?

Yet "God be praised!" the Pilgrim said,
Who saw the blossoms peer
Above the brown leaves, dry and dead,
"Behold our May flower here!"

"God wills it. here our rest shall be,
Our years of wandering o'er,
For us the May flower of the sea,
Shall spread her sails no more."

O sacred flowers of faith and hope,
As sweetly now as then
Ye bloom on many a birchen slope,
In many a pine dark glen.

Behind the sea-wall's rugged length,
Unchanged, your leaves unfold,
Like love behind the manly strength
Of the brave hearts of old.

So live the fathers in their sons,
Their sturdy faith be ours,
And ours the love that overruns
Its rocky strength with flowers.



INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.



The Pilgrim's wild and wintry day
Its shadows round us draws ;
The May flower of his stormy bay,
Our Freedom's struggling cause.

But warmer suns ere long shall bring
To life the frozen sod ;
And, through dead leaves of hope, shall spring
Afresh the flowers of God !

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

A Sprig of Mignonette.

THE lingering perfume of thy flower,
Its dying fragrance, sadly sweet,
Though faint to that of Summer's bower,
It still is soothing thus to greet.

The gusty winds, the dark'ning cloud,
The chilly mists, and rain, and dews,
And drifted leaves which half enshroud
Thy beauties,—all delight my Muse ;

And boast a charm that far outvies
The grace of Summer's proudest day,
When varied blooms of richer dyes
Unfolded to the sun's warm ray.



FLOWER AND LEAF.

To me thy yet surviving bloom
And lingering sweetness can recall
Hearts which, unchill'd by gath'ring gloom,
Can meekly live and love through all.

From such, in seasons dark and drear,
Immortal hopes of noblest worth,
Feelings and thoughts to virtue dear,
Gush like thy dying fragrance forth,

And fling a holier charm around
Than prosperous hours could ever know ;
For rapture's smile less fair is found
Than that which Patience lends to Woe !

BERNARD BARTON.

ALL things decay with time : The forest sees
The growth and downfall of her aged trees ;
That timber tall, which three-score lustres stood
The proud dictator of the state-like wood,
I mean the sovereign of all plants, the oak,
Droops, dies, and falls without the cleaver's stroke.

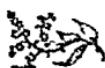
ROBERT HERRICK.



On the Aged Oak.

AT OAKLEY, SOMERSET (1832)

I WAS a young fair tree :
Each spring with quivering green
My boughs were clad ; and far
Down the deep vale, a light
Shone from me on the eyes
Of those who passed,—a light
That told of sunny days,
And blossoms, and blue sky .
For I was ever first
Of all the grove to hear
The soft voice under ground
Of the warm-working spring ;
And ere my brethren stirred
Their sheathèd buds, the kine,
And the kine's keeper, came
Slow up the valley-path,
And laid them underneath
My cool and rustling leaves ;
And I could feel them there
As in the quiet shade
They stood, with tender thoughts,
That passed along their life
Like wings on a still lake—
Blessing me ;—and to God,
The blessed God, who cares



FLOWER AND LEAF.



For all my little leaves,
Went up the silent praise ;
And I was glad, with joy
Which life of labouring things
I'll knows,—the joy that sinks
Into a life of rest.

Ages have fled since then :—
But deem not my pierced trunk
And scanty leafage serves
No high behest, my name
Is sounded far and wide :
And in the Providence
That guides the steps of men,
Hundreds have come to view
My grandeur in decay ;
And there hath passed from me
A quiet influence
Into the minds of men .
The silver head of age,
The majesty of laws,
The very name of God,
And holiest things that are,
Have won upon the heart
Of humankind the more,
For that I stand to meet
With vast and bleaching trunk
The rudeness of the sky.

HENRY ALFORD.



The Oak.

WHAT gnarled stretch, what depth of shade, is
his !

There needs no crown to mark the forest's king,
How in his leaves outshines full summer's bliss !

Sun, storm, rain, dew, to him their tribute bring,
Which he with such benignant royalty

Accepts, as overpayeth what is lent ;
All nature seems his vassal proud to be,
And cunning only for his ornament.

How towers he, too, amid the billowed snows
An unquelled exile from the summer's throne,
Whose plain, uncinctured front more kingly shows,
Now that the obscuring courtier leaves are flown.

His boughs make music of the winter air,
Jewelled with sleet, like some cathedral front
Whose clinging snow-flakes with quaint art repair,
The dints and furrows of time's envious brunt.

How doth his patient strength the rude March wind
Persuade to seem glad breaths of summer breeze,
And win the soil that fain would be unkind,
To swell his revenues with proud increase !
He is the gem ; and all the landscape wide
(So doth his grandeur isolate the sense)
Seems but the setting, worthless all beside,
An empty socket, were he fallen thence.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



So, from oft converse with life's wintry gales,
Should man learn how to clasp with tougher roots
The inspiring earth :—how otherwise avails
The leaf-creating sap that sunward shoots?
So every year that falls with noiseless flake
Should fill old scars upon the stormward side,
And make hoar age revered for age's sake,
Not for traditions of youth's leafy pride.

So, from the pinched soil of churlish fate,
True hearts compel the sap of sturdier growth,
And between earth and heaven stand simply great,
That these shall seem but their attendants both,
For nature's forces with obedient zeal
Wait on the rooted faith and oaken will ;
As quickly the pretender's cheat they feel,
And turn mad Pucks to flout and mock him still.

Lord ! all thy works are lessons—each contains
Some emblem of man's all-containing soul ;
Shall he make fruitless all thy glorious pains,
Delving within thy grace an eyeless mole ?
Make me the least of thy Dodona-grove,
Cause me some message of thy truth to bring,
Speak but a word through me, nor let thy love
Among my boughs disdain to perch and sing.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.



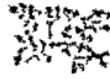
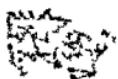
To an Olive Branch.

SADLY I walkt within the field
To see what comfort it would yield :
And as I went my private way,
An Olive branch before me lay :
And seeing it, I made a stay.
And took it up, and view'd it ; then
Kissing the omen, said Amen :
Be, be it so, and let this be
A Divination unto me :
That in short time my woes shall cease
And Love shall crown my end with peace.

ROBERT HERRICK.

The Olive Tree.

THE Palm—the Vine—the Cedar—each hath
power
To bid fair Oriental shapes glance by,
And each quick glistening of the Laurel bower
Wafts Grecian images o'er fancy's eye.
But thou pale Olive !—in thy branches lie
Far deeper spells than prophet grove of old



Might e'er ensline --I could not hear thee sigh,
To the wind's faintest whisper, nor behold
One shiver of thy leaves' dim silvery green,
Without high thoughts and solemn, of that scene
When, in the garden, the Redeemer pray'd--
When pale stars look'd upon his fainting head,
And angels, ministering in silent dread,
Trembled, perchance, within thy trembling bower.

ELIZIA D. HEMANS.

The Passion Flower.

ART thou a type of beauty, or of power,
Of sweet enjoyment, or disastrous sin?
For each thy name denoteth, Passion-flower!
 O no! thy pure corolla's depth within
 We trace a holier symbol; yea, a sign
"Twixt God and man; a record of that hour
 When the expiatory Act divine
Cancelled that curse which was our mortal bower.
It is the Cross! never hath Psalmist's tongue
Fuller of hope to human frailty sung
 Than this mute Teacher in a floret's breast--
A star of guidance the wild woods among;
 A page, with more than lettered lore impress;
 A beacon to the havens of the Blest.

SIR AUBREY DE VERE.



The Sigh of the Pine-tree.

I KNOW what the forest saith,
The forest of dark green pines,
That are moved by the wild wind's breath
When the cold clear starlight shines,
And the tides of the deep air-ocean
Come rolling through their lines.

I know, but I cannot tell,
For want of the mystic speech,
And the words ineffable,
That wisdom cannot teach,
Ev'n on her highest mountain
Where she sits beyond our reach.

But I listen all night long
To the low eternal sigh—
To the melancholy song,
Burthen'd with mysteries high—
Earth-moanings set to music
On the harps of the upper sky.

I listen all night through,
And ever and ever I hear
One word that seems as two,
And two that mingle clear
Into a third low whisper,
Far off, but drawing near.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



I feel what the forest sings
With its weird unearthly breath.—
Three thoughts—three words—three things :
Sorrow and Love and Death.
The mystery ! the mystery !
Behold what the pine-tree saith !

CHARLES MACKAY.

The Pine.

THE elm lets fall its leaves before the frost,
The very oak grows shivering and sere,
The trees are barren when the summer's lost ;
But one tree keeps its goodness all the year.
Green pine, unchanging as the days go by,
Thou art thyself beneath whatever sky :
Thy shelter from all winds, my own strong pine.
'Tis spring, 'tis summer, still, while thou art mine.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

Poor Robin.

NOW when the primrose makes a splendid show,
And lilies face the March-winds in full blow,
And humbler growths as moved with one desire
Put on, to welcome spring, their best attire,



Poor Robin* is yet flowerless ; but how gay
 With his red stalks upon this sunny day !
 And, as his tufts of leaves he spreads, content
 With a hard bed and scanty nourishment,
 Mixed with the green, some shine not lacking power
 To rival summer's brightest scarlet flower ;
 And flowers they well might seem to passers-by,
 If looked at only with a careless eye ;
 Flowers—or a richer produce (did it suit
 The season) sprinklings of ripe strawberry fruit.

But while a thousand pleasures come unsought,
 Why fix upon his wealth or want a thought ?
 Is the string touched in prelude to a lay
 Of pretty fancies that would round him play
 When all the world acknowledged elfin sway ?
 Or does it suit our humour to commend
 Poor Robin as a sure and crafty friend,
 Whose practice teaches, spite of names to show
 Bright colours whether they deceive or no ?—
 Nay, we would simply praise the free good-will
 With which, though slighted, he, on naked hill
 Or in warm valley, seeks his part to fill ;
 Cheerful alike if bare of flowers as now,
 Or when his tiny gems shall deck his brow :
 Yet more, we wish that men by men despised,
 And such as lift their foreheads overprized,

* The small white geranium.



Should sometimes think, where'er they chance to spy
This child of Nature's own humility,
What recompense is kept in store or left
For all that seem neglected or bereft ;
With what nice care equivalents are given,
How just, how bountiful, the hand of Heaven.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

The flower of the field.

THERE grew a poppy in a plot of corn,
And three men went thereby, before the heat
Had drawn from out the field beneath their feet
The freshness of the dew-drops and the morn.
Then did the loveliness of that lone flower
Strike in upon the sense of all the three ;
And one, a youth, spake in that thoughtful hour,
And said, "Methinks this poppy well might be
Some rich dark Southern beauty, sleepy-sweet,
Girt with a bending ring of gracious men."
The second, one that was of riper years,
Made answer,—"Nay, a blood-red banner torn
By steel of strife, and blown with winds of war,
And guarded round by ranks of shining spears."
Then spake to them the third whose head was hoar—
"Death comes to love and war ; what did they then ?
This flower has one speech only unto me—
That man is as the grass, and all his pride,



Of war, and beauty of love, shall suddenly
Fade like the flowers in the sad autumn-tide ;
The wind sweeps over them, and they are gone." "
And thereupon those three went silent on,
And the low sunlight lay uncrossed by shade
Until a maiden came, who hummed a song
For very gladness, as she tripped along,
The freshness of the morning in her eyes ;
Nor was she moved as they, in any wise,
To any thought of that which makes afraid,
But stopped and plucked the poppy from the ground
And set it on the whiteness of her dress,
And so passed on, with added loveliness.
No hidden inner meaning had she found,
Nor thought of strife or death to make her sad—
The sole sweet beauty was enough for her :
She took God's thought, the poppy, and was glad—
So was she Nature's best interpreter.

ANON.

Primroses.

WHY do ye weep, sweet babes? can tears
 Speak grief to you,
Who were but born
 Just as the modest morn
Teem'd her refreshing dew?



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Alas, you have not known that shower
That mars a flower,
Nor felt th' unkind
Breath of a blasting wind;
Nor are ye worn with years,
Or warp'd as we,
Who think it strange to see
Such pretty flowers, like to orphans young,
To speak by tears, before ye have a tongue.

Speak, whimp'ring younglings, and make known
The reason why
Ye droop and weep;
Is it for want of sleep,
Or childish lullaby?
Or that ye have not seen as yet
The violet?
Or brought a kiss
From that Sweet-heart to this?
—No, no, this sorrow shown
By your tears shed,
Would have this lecture read,
That things of greatest, so of meanest worth,
Conceived with grief are, and with tears brought forth.

ROBERT HERRICK.



From "Peter Bell."

A PRIMROSE by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

To an Early Primrose.

MILD offspring of a dark and sullen sire!
Whose modest form, so delicately fine,
Was nurs'd in whirling storms,
And cradled in the winds—

Thee when young Spring first question'd Winter's
sway

And dar'd the sturdy blusterer to the fight,
Thee on this bank he threw
To mark his victory.

In this low vale, the promise of the year,
Serene thou openest to the nipping gale,
Unnoticed and alone,
Thy tender elegance.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



So Virtue blooms, brought forth amid the storms
Of chill adversity, in some lone walk
Of life she rears her head,
Obscure and unobserv'd;

While every bleaching breeze that on her blows
Chastens her spotless purity of breast,
And hardens her to bear
Serene the ills of life

HENRY KIRK WHITF

The Primrose.

THE milk-white blossoms of the thorn
Are waving o'er the pool,
Moved by the wind that breathes along
So sweetly and so cool.
The hawthorn clusters bloom above,
The primrose hides below,
And on the lonely passer by
A modest glance doth throw!

The humble Primrose' bonnie face
I meet it every where;
Where other flowers disdain to bloom
It comes and nestles there.



INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.

Like God's own light, on every place
In glory it doth fall ;
And where its dwelling place is made,
It straightway hallows all !

Where'er the green-winged linnet sings
The Primrose bloometh lone ;
And love it wins—deep love—from all
Who gaze its sweetness on.
On field-paths narrow, and in woods
We meet thee near and far,
Till thou becomest prized and loved,
As things familiar are !

The stars are sweet at eventide,
But cold, and far away ;
The clouds are soft in summer time,
But all unstable they ;
The rose is rich—but pride of place
Is far too high for me—
God's simple common things I love—
My Primrose, such as thee !

I love the fireside of my home,
Because all sympathies,
The feelings fond of every day,
Around its circle rise.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



And while admiring all the flowers
That Summer suns can give,
Within my heart the Primrose sweet
In lowly love doth live !

ROBERT NICOLL.

In Spring.

SWEET primrose-time ! when thou art here
I go by grassy ledges
Of long lane-side, and pasture-mead,
And moss-entangled hedges :

And all about her army gay
The primrose weather musters,
In single knots, and scatter'd files,
And constellated clusters.

And golden-headed children go
Among the golden blossoms,
And harvest a whole meadow's wealth,
Heap'd in their dainty bosoms.

Ah ! play your play, sweet little ones,
While life is gladness only :
Nor ask an equal mirth from hearts
Which, e'en with you, are lonely.



INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.

God to His flowers His flowers gives,
Pure happiness uncloying :
Whilst they, whose primrose time is past,
Enjoy in your enjoying.

FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE.

The Rhodora,

ON BEING ASKED, WHENCE IS THE FLOWER ?

RHODORA ! if the sages ask thee why,
This charm is wasted on the marsh and sky,
Dear, tell them that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being :
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose !
I never thought to ask, I never knew ;
But in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there brought
you.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

Sonnet.

O HOW much more doth beauty beauteous seem

By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!

The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem

For that sweet odour which doth in it live:

The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye

As the perfum'd tincture of the roses,

Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly

When summer's breath their mark'd buds discloses:

But, for their virtue only is their show,

They live unwoo'd and unrespected fade,

Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;

Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made:

And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall fade, my verse distils your truth.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

From "The Passionate Pilgrim."

SWEET Rose, fair Flower, untimely pluck'd, soon faded,

Pluck'd in the bud, and faded in the spring.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.



From "Othello."

WHEN I have plucked the Rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
It must needs wither : I'll smell it on the tree.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

A Rose.

A ROSE, as fair as ever saw the North,
Grew in a little garden all alone ;
A sweeter flower did Nature ne'er put forth,
Nor fairer garden yet was never known :
The maidens danc't about it more and more
And learnèd bards of it their ditties made ;
The nimble fairies, by the pale fac'd moon,
Water'd the root, and kiss'd her pretty shade.
But, welladay, the gard'ner careless grew ;
The maids and fairies both were kept away,
And in a drought the caterpillars threw
'Themselves upon the bud and every spray.

God shield the stock ! if heaven send no supplies
The fairest blossom of the garden dies.

WILLIAM BROWNE.

FLOWER AND LEAF.



From "To Virgins."

GATHER ye rose-buds while ye may;
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.

ROBERT HERRICK.

From "Virtue."

SWEET rose, whose hue angry and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in the grave
And thou must die.

GEORGE HERBERT.

Go, Lovely Rose.

GO, lovely rose!
Tell her, that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.



INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.



Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That had'st thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired ;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die, that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee ;
How small a part of time they share,
That are so wondrous sweet and fair.

EDMUND WALLER.

Yet, though thou fade,
From thy dead leaves let fragrance rise,
And teach the maid
That goodness Time's rude hand defies,
That virtue lives when beauty dies.

HENRY KIRKE WHITE.



The Rose's Pride.

THOU blushing rose, within whose virgin leaves
The wanton wind to sport himself presumes,
Whilst from their rifled wardrobe he receives
For his wings purple, for his breath perfumes!

Blown in the morning, thou shalt fade ere noon;
What boots a life which in such haste forsakes thee?
Thou'rt wondrous frolic, being to die so soon,
And passing proud a little colour makes thee.

SIR RICHARD FANSHAW.

The Rose.

THE rose had been washed, just washed in a
shower,
Which Mary to Anna conveyed,
The plentiful moisture encumbered the flower,
And weighed down its beautiful head.

The cup was all filled, and the leaves were all wet,
And it seemed, to a fanciful view,
To weep for the buds it had left with regret
On the flourishing bush where it grew.



INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.



I hastily sei/cd it, unsit as it was
For a nosegay, so dripping and drowned ;
And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas !
I snapped it—it fell to the ground.

“And such,” I exclaimed, “is the pitiless part
Some act by the delicate mind,
Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
Already to sorrow resigned !

“This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,
Might have bloomed with its owner awhile ;
And the tear that is wiped with a little address
May be followed perhaps by a smile.”

WILLIAM COWPER.

From “The Banks o’ Doon.”

WI' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree,
And my fause lover stole my rose,
But, ah ! he left the thorn wi' me !

ROBERT BURNS.



Song.

THE rose that weeps with morning dew,
And glitters in the sunny ray,
In tears and smiles resembles you,
When Love breaks Sorrow's cloud away.

The dews that bend the blushing flower
Enrich the scent—renew the glow ;
So Love's sweet tears exalt his power,
So bliss more brightly shines by woe !

ANNE RADCLIFFE.

'Tis the Last Rose of Summer,

TIS the last rose of summer
Left blooming alone ;
All her lovely companions
Are faded and gone ;
No flower of her kindred,
No rose-bud is nigh,
To reflect back her blushes,
Or give sigh for sigh.



INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.



I'll not leave thee, thou lone one !

To pine on the stem ;

Since the lovely are sleeping,

Go, sleep thou with them.

Thus kindly I scatter

Thy leaves o'er the bed,

Where thy mates of the garden

Lie scentless and dead.

So soon may *I* follow

When friendships decay,

And from Love's shining circle

The gems drop away.

When true hearts lie wither'd

And fond ones are flown,

Oh ! who would inhabit

This bleak world alone ?

THOMAS MOORE.

Transplanted flowers.

YE living gems of cold and fragrant fire !

Y Die ye for ever, when ye die, ye flowers ?

Take ye, when in your beauty ye expire,

An everlasting farewell of your bowers ?

No more to listen to the wooing air,

And song-brought morn, the cloud-tint'd woodlands
o'er !

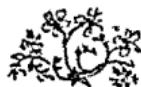


No more to June's soft lips your breasts to bare,
And drink fond evening's dewy breath no more !
Soon fades the sweetest, first the fairest dies,
For frail and fair are sisters ; but the heart,
Fill'd with deep love, death's power to kill denies,
And sobs e'en o'er the dead, " We *cannot* part ! "
Have I not seen thee, Wild Rose, in my dreams ?
Like a pure spirit—beauteous as the skies,
When the clear blue is brightest, and the streams
Dance down the hills, reflecting the rich dyes
Of morning clouds, and cistus woodbine-twined—
Didst thou not wake me from a dream of death ?
Yea, and thy voice was sweeter than the wind
When it enhales the love-sick violet's breath,
Bending it down with kisses, where the bee
Hums over golden gorse and sunny broom.
Soul of the Rose ! what said'st thou then to me ?
" We meet," thou said'st, though sever'd by the tomb:
Lo, brother, this is heav'n ! and, thus the just shall
bloom.

EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

From "Fourth Sunday in Lent."

W^HY should gentle hearts and true
Bare to the rude world's withering
view
Their treasure of delight !



No—let the dainty rose awhile
 Her bashful fragrance hide—
Rend not her silken veil too soon,
But leave her, in her own soft noon,
 To flourish and abide.

JOHN KEBLE.

A Thought of the Rose.

HOW much of memory dwells amidst thy bloom,
 Rose ! ever wearing beauty for thy dower !
The bridal-day—the festival—the tomb—
 Thou hast thy part in each, thou stateliest flower !

Therefore with thy soft breath come floating by
 A thousand images of love or grief,
Dreams, fill'd with tokens of mortality,
 Deep thoughts of all things beautiful and brief.

Not such thy spells o'er those that hail'd thee first,
 In the clear light of Eden's golden day !
There thy rich leaves to crimson glory burst,
 Link'd with no dim remembrance of decay.

Rose ' for the banquet gather'd, and the bier ;
 Rose ! colour'd now by human hope and pain ;
Surely where death is not—nor change, nor fear,
 Yet may we meet thee, joy's own flower, again !

FELICIA D. HEMANS.



From "Passing away."

IT is written on the rose
In its glory's full array—
Read what those buds disclose—
"Passing away."

FELICIA D. HEMANS.

From "A Scene on the Banks of the Hudson."

LOVELIEST of lovely things are they,
On earth that soonest pass away.
The rose that lives its little hour
Is prized beyond the sculptured flower.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

From "Miss Kilmansegg."

POOR Peggy hawks nosegays from street to street
Till—think of that who find life so sweet!—
She hates the smell of roses.

THOMAS HOOD.

From "The White Rose."

ROSE of the desert ! thou art to me
A emblem of stainless purity,—
Of those who, keeping their garments white,
Walk on through life with steps aright.

DAVID MACBETH MOIR.

A Dead Rose.

O ROSE, who dares to name thee?
No longer roseate now, nor soft, nor sweet,
But pale and hard and dry as stubble wheat,—
Kept seven years in a drawer, thy titles shame thee.

The breeze that used to blow thee
Between the hedgerow thorns, and take away
An odour up the lane to last all day,—
If breathing now, ensweetened, would forego thee.

The sun that used to smite thee,
And mix his glory in thy gorgeous urn
Till beam appeared to bloom, and flower to burn,
If shining now, with not a hue would light thee.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



The dew that used to wet thee,
And, white first, grow incarnadined because
It lay upon thee where the crimson was,—
If dropping now, would darken where it met thee.

The fly that 'lit upon thee
To stretch the tendrils of its tiny feet
Along thy leaf's pure edges after heat,—
If 'lighting now, would coldly overrun thee

The bee that once did suck thee,
And build thy perfumed ambers up his hive,
And swoon in thee for joy, till scarce alive,—
If passing now, would blindly overlook thee.

The heart doth recognize thee,
Alone, alone ! the heart doth smell thee sweet,
Doth view thee fair, doth judge thee most complete,
Perceiving all these changes that disguise thee.

Yes, and the heart doth owe thee,
More love, dead rose, than to any roses bold
Which Julia wears at dances, smiling cold :—
Lie still upon this heart which breaks below thee !

MARY BARRETT BROWNING.



From "A Lay of the Early Rose."

A ROSE once grew within
A garden April-green,
In her loneliness, in her loneliness,
And the fairer for that oneness.

A white rose delicate
On a tall bough and straight :
Early comer, early comer,
Never waiting for the summer.

Her pretty gestes did win
South winds to let her in,
In her loneliness, in her loneliness,
All the fairer for that oneness.

" For if I wait," said she,
" Till time for roses be,—
For the moss-rose and the musk-rose,
Maiden-blush and royal-dusk rose,—

" What glory then for me
In such a company?—
Roses plenty, roses plenty,
And one nightingale for twenty? ,



FLOWER AND LEAF.



“ Nay, let me in,” said she,
“ Before the rest are free,
In my loneliness, in my loneliness,
All the fairer for that oneness.

“ For I would lonely stand
Uplifting my white hand,—
On a mission, on a mission,
To declare a coming vision.

“ Upon which lifted sign,
What worship will be mine !
What addressing, what caressing !
And what thanks and praise and blessing !

“ A wind-like joy will rush
Through every tree and bush,
Bending softly in affection
And spontaneous benediction.

“ Three larks shall leave a cloud,
To my whiter beauty vowed,
Singing gladly all the moontide,
Never waiting for the suntide.

“ Ten nightingales shall flee
Their woods for love of me,
Singing sadly all the suntide,
Never waiting for the moontide.

But ah,—alas for her !
No thing did minister
To her praises, to her praises,
More than might unto a daisy's.

No tree nor bush was seen
To boast a perfect green,
Scarcely having, scarcely having,
One leaf broad enough for waving.

• • • •
The lark, too high or low,
I ween, did miss her so,
With his nest down in the gorses,
And his song in the star-courses.

The nightingale did please
To loiter beyond seas :
Guess him in the Happy islands,
Learning music from the silence !

• • • •
—Poor Rose, to be misknown !
Would she had ne'er been blown,
In her loneliness, in her loneliness,
All the sadder for that oneness !

E. B. BROWNING.



Incense of Flowers.

THIS rich abundance of the rose, its breath
On which I almost think my soul could live,
This sweet ambrosia, which even in death
Its leaves hold on to give—

Whence is it? From dank earth or scentless air?
Or from the inner sanctuaries of heaven?
We probe the branch, the root—no incense there—
O God, whence is it given?

Is it the essence of the morning dew,
Or distillation of a purer sphere—
The breath of the immortals coming through
To us immortals here?

Exquisite mystery, my heart devours
The living inspiration, and I know
Sweet revelations with the breath of flowers
Into our beings flow.

ROBERT LEIGHTON.

The Wild Roses.

I WALKED in the joyous morning,
The morning of June and life,
Ere the birds had ceased to warble
Their sweetest of love and strife.



I walked alone, in the morning,
And who so glad as I,
When I saw the pale wild roses
Hang from the branch on high?

Fairer than stars were the roses,
Faint was the fragrance and rare,
Not any flower in the garden
Could with those roses compare.

But the day was all before me,
The tumult of youth's delight ;
Why bear a burden of roses
Before the calm of the night?

Let them stay awhile to gladden
The air, and the earth below,
With tender beauty and sweetness
They cannot choose but bestow.

So I kissed the roses, and lightly
I breathed of their breath divine ;
It is time when I come back, I said,
To make the sweet roses mine.

I went in the gladsome morning,—
I said, we part for an hour ;
The branch of wild roses trembled,
The dew was on every flower.

I returned in the joyless evening,
I yearned with passion then
For the pale and peerless roses
I never should see again.

For another had taken delight
In colour and perfume rare,
And another hand had gathered
My roses beyond compare.

I may wander east, may wander west,
Wherever the sun doth shine,
I never shall find the wild roses,
The roses I thought were mine.

ELIZABETH D. BULLOCK.

Song.

WHEN the Rose came I loved the Rose,
And thought of none beside,
Forgetting all the other flowers,
And all the others died ;
And morn and noon, and sun and showers,
And all things loved the Rose,
Who only half returned my love,
Blooming alike for those.



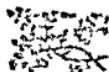
I was the rival of a score
Of loves on gaudy wing,
The nightingale I would implore
For pity not to sing ;
Each called her his ; still I was glad
To wait or take my part ;
I loved the Rose—who might have had
The fairest lily's heart.

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY.

The Falling Rose.

PASS, falling rose !
Not now the glory of the spring is round thee ;
Not now the air of summer round thee blows ;
Pallid and chill the autumn's mists have found thee ;
Pass, falling rose !

Pass, falling rose !
Where are the songs that wooed thy glad unfolding ?
Only the south the wood-dove's soft wail
knows ,
Far southern eaves the swallow's nest are holding ;
Pass, falling rose !



Pass, falling rose!
Linger the blooms to birth thy glory wooing?
Linger the hues that lured thee to disclose?
Long, long, their leaves the dark earth have been
strewing;
Pass, falling rose!

WILLIAM COX BENNETT.

Cliff Roses.

P ALE little sister of rich red roses,
Wild little sister of garden queens,
Art thou content that thy flower uncloses
Here where the hind to the ocean leans?
They, where the lawns are soft and shaded,
Hold their court amid eyes that gaze;
Thou by the lone sea li'st, and faded
Fall thy leaves in the salt sea sprays.
Smitten of every storm that blusters,
Crushed by the mimic avalanche,
Bravely still thy delicate clusters
Laugh from thicket and thorny branch
Nought may we know of all thou knowest,
All that the soft wind brings to thee?
Under the cliff top where thou growest
Sail the ship to the open sea!



Art not thou and thy flowers clinging
Ghosts of many a sad farewell,
Fluttering home from the ships, and bringing
Tidings for loving hearts to tell?

Or art thou, rather, a blithe fore-comer,
Blown by winds from the homeward ships,
A kiss, turned flower in the breath of summer,
A word that has quickened from eager lips?

Nay, though sweet as the longed-for hour,
Fair as the face that we yearn to see,
Nothing thou art but a simple flower,
Growing where God has planted thee.

F. W. BOURDILLON.

From "The Four Bridges."

THE roses that in yonder hedge appear
Outdo our garden-buds which bloom within ;
But since the hand may pluck them every day,
Unmarked they bud, bloom, drop, and drift away.

JEAN INGELOW.

From "The Artist."

THIS wild white rose-bud in my hand
Hath meanings meant for me alone;
Which no one else can understand :
To you it breathes with alter'd tone :

How shall I class its properties
For you? or its wise whisperings
Interpret? Other ears and eyes
It teaches many other things.

ROBERT, LORD LYTTON.

From "Songs of the Summer Night."

WOO on, with odour wooing me,
Faint rose with fading core;
For God's rose-thought that blooms in thee
Will bloom for evermore.

GEORGE MAC DONALD.

June Roses.

NO lower, no lower, along the lane !
For the place it was here, I know,
Where over the far meadow's bloom'y wane,
Yon rose waves to and fro ;
I remember the curve of the flexible spray
And the way these roses grow.



INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.



How they float on the marge of the verdure lush,

And ruffle to feel the breeze,

Where they lie full-blown with a delicate flush !

Do you love them most, or these

Opening coy with a crimson blush,

Hiding golden hearts for the bees ?

Do you mind how you bade me cull you a rose ?

But the spray swam over my head

With a stress of air, one would say that it knows,

“ As you breathed the word it fled ;

With the sister blooms it would fain repose

Till the gentle leaves be shed ! ”

“ Little skilled in reading the heart of a flower , ”

“ Your answering tones I heard ;

See close to your hand the pale rose cower

Lest you take her at her word ! ”

But there fell the first drop of a thunder-shower,

And the rose it was left and blurred.

Is it easier now to remember the spot

Where we paused in the sweet green lane,

Than to find the warm feeling we soon forgot,

Lest there like the flower to wane ?

She said “ There are hearts that blossom not

Like the roses of June again ! ”



From "Symbols."

I WATCHED a rose bud very long
Brought on by dew and sun and shower,
Waiting to see the perfect flower:
Then, when I thought it should be strong,
It opened at the matin hour
And fell at even-song.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

From "Gone for Ever."

O HAPPY rose-bud blooming
Upon thy parent tree,
Nay, thou art too presuming;
For soon the Earth entombing
Thy faded charms shall be,
And the chill damp consuming.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

The Wandering Bee.

A RARE red rose on a terrace grew,
Entrancing of odour and ripe in hue;
A fair white rose to a ruin bent,
Tender in beauty and soft in scent.
Ha ha! ha ha! said the wandering bee,
Which of the roses has honey for me?

The rich red rose stands out in her place
And smiles to the sun with a broad brave face,
The strong bold breeze comes frolicking there,—
Lavish her welcome to sun and to air.

Ha ha ! ha ha ! said the wandering bee,
You are the friend in fine weather for me.

The sweet white rose clings close to the wall,
Where lovingly eventide sunbeams fall,
No rash rude storm can ruffle her breast,
Cradled in calmness and perfect rest.

Ha ha ! ha ha ! said the wandering bee,
You are the friend in rough weather for me.

EARL OF SOUTHESK.

From "Not to be."

THE rose said. "Let but this long rain be past,
And I shall feel my sweetness in the sun
And pour its fulness into life at last."

But when the rain was done,
But when dawn sparkled through unclouded air,
She was not there.

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.



From "The Bride of Pennacook."

THE garden rose may richly bloom
In cultured soil and genial air,
To cloud the light of Fashion's room
Or droop in Beauty's midnight hair ;
In lovelier grace to sun and dew
The sweetbrier on the hillside shows
Its single leaf and fainter hue,
Untrained and wildly free, yet still a sister rose.

J. G. WHITTIER.

Snapdragon.

I AM rooted in a wall
Of buttress'd tower or ancient hall ;
Prison'd in an art-wrought bed,
Cased in mortar, cramped with lead ;
Of a living stock alone
Brother of the lifeless stone.

Else unprized, I have my worth
On the spot that gives me birth ;
Nature's vast and varied field
Braver flowers than me will yield,
Bold in form and rich in hue,
Children of a purer dew ;
Smiling lips and winning eyes
Meet for earthly paradise.



Choice are such,—and yet thou knowest
Highest he, whose lot is lowest.
They, proud hearts, a home reject
Framed by human architect ;
Be it mine to set restraint
On roving wish and selfish plaint ;
And for man's drear haunts to leave
Dewy morn and balmy eve.
Be it mine the barren stone
To deck with green life not its own,
So to soften and to grace
Of human works the rugged face.
Mine, the unseen to display
In the crowded public way,
Where life's busy arts combine
To shut out the Hand Divine.

Ah ! no more a scentless flower,
By approving Heaven's high power,
Suddenly my leaves exhale
Fragrance of the Syrian gale.
Ah ! 'tis timely comfort given
By the answering breath of Heaven !
May it be ! then well might I
In college cloister live and die.
Humble—I can bear to dwell
Near the pale recluse's cell,
And I spread my crimson bloom,
Mingled with the cloister's gloom.



Life's gay gifts and honours rare,
Flowers of favour! win and wear!
Rose of beauty, be the queen
In pleasure's ring and festive scene.
Ivy, climb and cluster, where
Lordly oaks vouchsafe a stair.
Vaunt, fair Lily, stately dame,
Pride of birth and pomp of name;
Miser crocus, starved and cold,
Hide in earth thy timid gold;
Travell'd dahlia, freely boast
Knowledge brought from foreign coast.
Pleasure, wealth, birth, knowledge, power,
These have each an emblem flower;
So for me alone remains
Lowly thought and cheerful pains.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.

To a Snowdrop.

ONE Flower, hemmed in with snows and white
as they,
But harder far, once more I see thee bend
Thy forehead, as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day by day,
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops, waylay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend:
Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend



INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.

Whose zeal outruns his promise ! Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odours lavishing
On the soft west-wind and his frolic peers ;
Nor will I then thy modest grace forget,
Chaste snowdrop, venturesous harbinger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years !

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

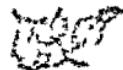
From "To ——."

THE welcome Snowdrop, . . .
That child of Winter, prompting thoughts that
climb
From desolation toward the genial prime.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

From "The Snowdrop."

WINTER'S gloomy night withdrawing,
Lo ! the young romantic Hours
Search the hill, the dale, the lawn,
To behold the Snow-drop white
Start to light,
And shine in Flora's desert bowers,
Beneath the vernal dawn,
The Morning Star of Flowers.



O welcome to our isle,
Thou messenger of Peace !
At whose bewitching smile
The embattled tempests cease :
Emblem of Innocence and Truth,
First-born of Nature's womb,
When strong in renovated youth.
She bursts from Winter's tomb ;
Thy parent's eye hath shed
A precious dew drop on thine head,
Frail as a mother's tear
Upon her infant's face,
When ardent hope to tender fear,
And anxious love, gives place.
But, lo ! the dew-drop flits away,
The sun salutes thee with a ray
Warm as a mother's kiss
Upon her infant's cheek,
When the heart bounds with bliss,
And joy that cannot speak.
— When I meet thee by the way,
Like a pretty sportive child,
On the winter-wasted wild,
With thy darling breeze at play,
Opening to the radiant sky
All the sweetness of thine eye ;
— O bright with sunbeams, fresh with showers,
O thou Fairy Queen of flowers !

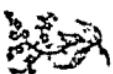


INDIVIDUAL FLOWERS.



Watch thee o'er the plain advance
At the head of Flora's dance ;
Simple Snow-drop, then in thee
All thy sister-train I see :
Every brilliant bud that blows,
From the blue-bell to the rose ;
All the beauties that appear
On the bosom of the year,
All that wreath the locks of Spring,
Summer's ardent breath perfume,
Or on the lap of Autumn bloom,
—All to thee their tribute bring,
Exhale their incense at thy shrine,
—Their hues, their odours, all are thine.
For while thy humble form I view,
The Muse's keen prophetic sight
Brings fair Futurity to light,
And Fancy's magic makes the vision true.

—There is Winter in my soul,
The winter of despair ;
O when shall Spring its rage control ?
When shall the Snow-drop blossom there ?
Gold gleams of comfort sometimes dart
A dawn of glory on my heart,
But quickly pass away :
Thus Northern lights the gloom adorn,
And give the promise of a morn



FLOWER AND LEAF.

That never turns to day !
—But, hark ! methinks I hear
A small still whisper in my ear ;
“ Rash youth, repent ;
Afflictions, from above,
Are angels sent
On embassies of love.
A fiery legion at thy birth,
Of chastening woes were given
To pluck the flowers of hope from earth,
And plant them high
O'er yonder sky,
Transform'd to stars,—and fix'd in heaven.”

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

To the Snowdrop.

PRETTY firstling of the year !
Herald of the host of flowers !
Hast thou left thy cavern drear,
In the hope of summer hours ?
Back into thy earthern bowers !
Back to thy warm world below ;
Till the strength of suns and showers
Quell the now relentless snow !



Art still here?—Alive? and blithe,—
Though the stormy Night hath fled,
And the Frost hath passed his scythe
O'er thy small unsheltered head?
Ah!—some lie amidst the dead,
(Many a giant stubborn tree,
Many a plant, its spirit shed),
That were better nursed than thee!

What hath saved thee? Thou wast not
'Gainst the arrowy winter furred,
Armed in scale—but all forgot
When the frozen winds were stirred.
Nature, who doth clothe the bird,
Should have hid thee in the earth,
Till the cuckoo's song was heard,
And Spring let loose her mirth.

Nature,—deep and mystic word!
Mighty mother, still unknown!
Thou didst sure the Snowdrop gird
With an armour all thine own!
Thou, who sent'st it forth alone
To the cold and sullen season,
(Like a thought at random thrown),
Sent it thus for some grave reason!



FLOWER AND LEAF.

If 'twere but to pierce the wind
With a single gentle thought,
Who shall deem thee harsh or blind?
Who that thou hast vainly wrought?
Hoard the gentle virtue, caught
From the Snowdrop—reader wise!
Good is good, wherever taught,
On the ground, or in the skies!

B. W. PROCTER.

From "To the Snowdrop."

THOU first-born of the year's delight,
Pride of the dewy glade,
In vernal green and virgin white,
Thy vestal robes, array'd :

"Tis not because thy drooping form
Sinks graceful on its nest,
When chilly shades from gathering storm
Affright thy tender breast ;

Nor for yon river islet wild
Beneath the willow spray,
Where, like the ringlets of a child,
Thou weav'st thy circle gay ;



'Tis not for these I love thee dear—
Thy shy averted smiles
To Fancy bode a joyous year,
One of Life's fairy isles.

They twinkle to the wintry moon,
And cheer the ungenial day,
And tell us, all will glisten soon
As green and bright as they.

Is there a heart that loves the spring,
Their witness can refuse?
Yet mortals doubt, when angels bring
From heaven their Easter news.

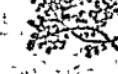
JOHN KEBLE.

From "The Snowdrop in the Snow."

THOU should'st have noble destiny, who, like
A Prophet, art shut out from kind and kin:
Who on the winter silence comest in
A still small voice. Pale Hermit of the year,
Flower of the wilderness! oh, not for thee
The jocund playmates of the maiden spring.
For when she danceth forth with cymballed feet,
Waking a-sudden' with great welcoming,



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Each calling each, they burst from hill to dell
In answering music. But thou art a bell,
A passing bell, snow muffled, dim and sweet.
As is the Poet to his fellow-men,
So, mid thy drifting snows, O Snowdrop, Thou.
Gifted, in sooth, beyond them, but no less
A snowdrop. And thou shalt complete his lot
And bloom as fair as now when thou art not.
Thou art the wonder of the seasons, O
First-born of Beauty. As the Angel near
Gazed on that first of living things which, when
The blast that ruled since Chaos o'er the sere
Leaves of primeval palms did sweep the plain,
Clung to the new-made sod and would not drive,
So gaze I upon thee amid the reign
Of Winter. And because thou livest, I live.
And art thou happy in thy loneliness?
Oh couldst thou hear the shouting of the floods,
Oh couldst thou know the stir among the trees
When—as the herald-voice of breeze on breeze
Proclaims the marriage pageant of the Spring
Advancing from the south—each hurries on
His wedding-garment, and the love chimes ring
Thro' nuptial valleys! No, serene and lone,
I will not flush thy cheek with joys like these.
Songs for the rosy morning; at grey prime
To hang the head and pray. Thou doest well.
I will not tell thee of the bridal train.



No ; let thy Moonlight die before their day
A Nun among the Maidens, thou and they.
Each hath some fond sweet office that doth strike
One of our trembling heartstrings musical.
Is not the hawthorn for the Queen of May ?
And cuckoo-flowers for whom the cuckoo's voice
Hails, like an answering sister, to the woods ?
Is not the maiden blushing in the rose ?
Shall not the babe and buttercup rejoice,
Twins in one meadow ! Are not violets all
By name or nature for the breast of Dames ?
For them the primrose, pale as star of prime,
For them the wind-flower, trembling to a sigh,
For them the dew stands in the eyes of day
That blink in April on the daisied lea ?
Like them they flourish and like them they fade,
And live beloved and loving. But for thee—
For such a bevy how art thou arrayed,
Flower of the Tempests ? What hast thou with them ?
Thou shalt be pearl unto a diadem
Which the Heavens jewel. *They* shall deck the
brows
Of joy and wither there. But *thou* shalt be
A Martyr's garland. Thou who, undismayed,
To thy spring dreams art true amid the snows
As he to better dreams amid the flames.



From "St Agnes."

MAKE thou my spirit pure and clean
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

TENNYSON.

Snowdrops.

WHITE thoughts we bring
Of waking Spring,
And happy bird
To music stirred.

Sweet thoughts we raise,
Of those white days,
When Mary mild
Presents her child.

High thoughts we tell
With trembling bell—
Earth's Easter day,
Saints' white array.



Glad thoughts are ours
Of angel-bowers,
Where sons of light
Shall walk in white.

RICHARD WILTON.

The Sunflower.

EAGLE of flowers ! I see thee stand,
And on the sun's noon-glory gaze :
With eye like his, thy lids expand
And fringe their disk with golden rays :
Though fix'd on earth, in darkness rooted there,
Light is thine element, thy dwelling air,
Thy prospect heaven.

So would mine eagle-soul descry,
Beyond the path where planets run,
The light of immortality,
The splendour of creation's sun :
Though sprung from earth, and hastening to the tomb,
In hope a flower of paradise to bloom,
I look to heaven.

JAMES MONTGOMERY.



From "The Thistle."

TWAS long after the grass and the flowers, one day,
That there came straggling along the way
A little traveller, somewhat late.
Tired he was and down he sat
In a ditch by the road, where he tried to nestle
Out of the dust and the noon tide heat.
Poor little vagabond wayside thistle !
In the ditch was his only safe retreat.
Flung out of the field as soon as found there,
And banish'd the garden, where should he stay ?
Wherever he roam'd, still Fortune frown'd there
And wherever he settled, spurn'd him away.

At sunrise he woke ; and he still was there
In the bright grass, breathing the balmy air.
He stretch'd his limbs, and he shook off the dust,
And he wash'd himself in the morning dew ;
And, opening his pedlar's pack, out thrust
A spruce little pair of leaflets new ;
And made for himself a fine white ruff,
About his neck to wear ;
And pruned and polish'd his prickles tough ;
And put on a holiday air.

So all the flowers of the field were alive in one :
And the glow of his sheen, and the gloss of his
down,
Were as jewels dead queens have confided alone
To the craftsman who fashions them all to a crown,
For each hope in the heart of the poor plant hidden,
Each vision of bliss and of beauty, nurst,
With a passion by Prejudice check'd and chidden,
For a life by the fiat of Fortune curst,
Rushing forthwith into rich reality,
Fill'd the cup of a quenchless thirst
Till it flow'd with exuberant prodigality,
And his long-pent life into blossom burst.
A single blossom : but statelier far,
And fairer, than many a million are.

ROBERT, LORD LYTTON.

The Lone Thorn.

BENEATH the scant shade of an aged thorn,
Silvered with age, and mossy with decay,
I stood, and there bethought me of its morn
Of verdant lustyhood, long passed away ;
Of its meridian vigour, now outworn
By cankering years, and by the tempest's sway.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



Bared to the pitying glebe.—Companionless,
Stands the gray thorn complaining to the wind—
Of all the old wood's leafy loveliness
The sole memorial that lags behind ;
Its compeers perished in their youthfulness,
Though round the larch their roots seem'd firmly
twined ;
How sad it is to be so anchored here
As to outlive one's mates, and die without a tear !

WILLIAM MOTHERWELL.

From "The Thistle."

IT was a thorn
And it stood forlorn
In the burning sunrise land :

A blighted thorn,
And at eve and morn
Thus it sigh'd to the desert sand—

" Every flower
By its beauty's power
With a crown of glory is crown'd.

" No crown have I
For a crown I sigh,
For a crown I have not found.



“A crown ! a crown !
A crown of mine own,
To wind in a maiden’s hair !”

Sad thorn, why grieve ?
Thou a crown shalt weave,
But not for a maiden to wear.

That crown shall shine
When all crowns save thine,
With the glory they gave, are gone :

For thou, my thorn,
Thy crown shall be worn
By the King of Sorrows alone

ROBERT, LORD LYTTON.

The Trailing Arbutus.

I WANDERED lonely where the pine trees made
Against the bitter east their barricade,
And, guided by its sweet
Perfume, I found, within a narrow dell,
The trailing spring-flower tinted like a shell
Amid dry leaves and mosses at my feet.



FLOWER AND LEAF.

From under dead boughs, for whose loss the pines
Moaned ceaseless overhead, the blossoming vines
Lifted their glad surprise,
While yet the bluebird smoothed in leafless trees
His feathers rufled by the chill sea-breeze,
And snow-drifts lingered under April skies.

As, pausing, o'er the lonely flower I bent,
I thought of lives more lonely, clogged and pent,
Which yet find room,
Through care and cumber, coldness and decay,
To lend a sweetness to the ungenial day,
And make the sad earth happier for their sake.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

From "On his Mistress, the Queen of
Bohemia."

YOU violets that first appear,
By your pure purple mantles known,
Like the proud virgins of the year,
As if the spring were all your own ;
What are you when the rose is blown ?

SIR HENRY WOTTON.



To Violets.

WELCOME, maids of honour,
You do bring
In the spring,
And wait upon her.

She has virgins many,
Fresh and fair;
Yet you are
More sweet than any.

You're the maiden posies ;
And so graced,
To be placed
'Fore damask roses.

—Yet, though thus respected,
By and by
Ye do lie,
Poor girls, neglected.

ROBERT HERRICK.

Violets.

BEAUTIFUL are you in your lowness ;
Bright in your hues, delicious in your scent ;
Lovely your modest blossoms, downward bent,
As shrinking from our gaze, yet prompt to bless



FLOWER AND LEAF.



The passer by with fragrance, and express
How gracefully, though mutely eloquent,
Are unobtrusive worth, and meek content,
Rejoicing in their own obscure recess.
Delightful flowerets ! at the voice of Spring
Your buds unfolded to its sunbeams bright ;
And though your blossoms soon shall fade from sight,
Above your lowly birthplace birds shall sing,
And from your clust'ring leaves the glow-worm fling
The emerald glory of its earth-born light.

BERNARD BARTON.

The Violet.

I LOVE all things the seasons bring,
All buds that open, birds that sing,
All hues, from white to jet ;
All the sweet words that Summer sends,
When she recalls her flowery friends,
But chief—the Violet !

I love, how much I love the rose,
On whose soft tips the South-wind blows,
In pretty amorous threat ;
The lily paler than the moon,
The odorous wondrous world of June,
Yet more—the Violet !



She comes, the first, the fairest thing
That Heaven upon the earth doth fling,
Ere Winter's star has set :
She dwells beneath her leafy screen,
And gives, as Angels give, unseen,
So, love—the Violet.

What modest thoughts the Violet teaches,
What gracious boons the Violet preaches,
Bright Maiden, ne'er forget !
But learn, and love, and so depart,
And sing thou, with thy wiser heart,
“ Long live the Violet ! ”

B. W. PROCTER.

On a Faded Violet.

THE colour from the flower is gone,
Which like thy sweet eyes smiled on me ;
The odour from the flower is flown,
Which breathed of thee and only thee.

A withered, lifeless, vacant form,
It lies on my abandoned breast,
And mocks the heart which yet is warm
With cold and silent rest.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



I weep—my tears revive it not;
I sigh—it breathes no more on me;
It's mute and uncomplaining lot
Is such as mine should be.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

The Yellow Violet.

WHEN beechen buds begin to swell,
And woods the blue-birds' warble know,
The yellow violet's modest bell
Peeps from the last year's leaves below.

Ere russet fields their green resume,
Sweet flower, I love, in forest bare,
To meet thee, when thy faint perfume
Alone is in the virgin air.

Of all her train, the hands of Spring
First plant thee in the watery mould,
And I have seen thee blossoming
Beside the snow-bank's edges cold.

Thy parent sun, who bade thee view
Pale skies, and chilling moisture sip,
Has bathed thee in his own bright hue,
And streaked with jet thy glowing lip.



Yet slight thy form, and low thy seat,
And earthward bent thy gentle eye,
Unapt the passing view to meet,
When loftier flowers are flaunting nigh.

Oft, in the sunless April day,
Thy early smile has stayed my walk ;
But 'midst the gorgeous blooms of May,
I passed thee on thy humble stalk.

So they, who climb to wealth, forget
The friends in darker fortunes tried.
I copied them—but I regret
That I should ape the ways of pride.

And when again the genial hour
Awakes the painted tribes of light,
I'll not o'erlook the modest flower
That made the woods of April bright.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

The Violet Girl.

WHEN fancy will continually rehearse
Some painful scene once present to the eye,
'Tis well to mould it into gentle verse,
That it may lighter on the spirit lie.



FLOWER AND LEAF.

Home yester-eve I wearily returned,
Though bright my morning mood and short my way,
But sad experience, in one moment earned,
Can crush the heaped enjoyments of the day.

Passing the corner of a populous street,
I marked a girl whose wont it was to stand,
With pallid cheek, torn gown, and naked feet,
And bunches of fresh Violets in each hand.

There her small commerce in the chill March weather
She plied with accents miserably mild ;
It was a frightful thought to set together
Those healthy blossoms and that fading child :—

Those luxuries and largess of the earth,
Beauty and pleasure to the sense of man,
And this poor sorry weed cast loosely forth
On Life's wild waste to struggle as it can !

To *me* that odorous purple ministers
Hope-bearing memories and inspiring glee,
While meanest images alone are hers,
The sordid wants of base humanity.

Think after all this lapse of hungry hours,
In the disfurnished chamber of dim cold,
How she must loathe the very scented flowers
That on the squalid table lie unsold !



Rest on your woodland banks and wither there,
Sweet preluders of Spring ! far better so,
Than live misusèd to fill the grasp of care,
And serve the piteous purposes of woe.

Ye are no longer Nature's gracious gift,
Yourselves so much and harbingers of more,
But a most bitter irony to lift
The veil that hides our vilest mortal sore.

LORD HOUGHTON.

Song.

VIOLETS, shy violets !
How many hearts with thee compare !
Who hide themselves in thickest green,
And thence unseen,
Ravish the enraptured air
With sweetness, dewy fresh and rare !

Violets, shy violets !
Human hearts to me shall be
Viewless violets in the grass,
And, as I pass,
Odours and sweet imagery
Will wait on mine and gladden me !

GEORGE M. FREDITH.



The Violet and the Rose.

THE violet invited my kiss—
I kissed it, and called it my bride;
“Was ever one slighted like this?”
Sighed the Rose as it stood by my side.

My heart ever open to grief,
To comfort the fair one I turned;
“Of fickle ones thou art the chief!”
Frown’d the Violet, and pouted, and mourned.

Then to end all disputes, I entwined
The love-stricken blossoms in one;
But that instant their beauty declined,
And I wept for the deed I had done!

JOSEPH SKIPSEY.

The Violet and the Rose.

THE violet in the wood, that’s sweet to-day,
Is longer sweet than roses of red June;
Set me sweet violets along my way,
And bid the red rose flower, but not too soon.

Ah violet, ah rose, why not the two?
Why bloom not all fair flowers the whole year,
through?

Why not the two, young violet, ripe rose?
Why dies one's sweetness when another blows?

AUGUSTA WEBSTER.

From "The Wallflower."

TO me it speaks of loveliness
That passes not with youth;
Of beauty which decay can bless,
Of constancy and truth.

Not in prosperity's bright morn,
Its streaks of golden light
Are lent her splendours to adorn,
And make them still more bright:

But in adversity's dark hour,
When glory is gone by;
It then exerts its gentle power
The scene to beautify.

Yes; lovely flower! and thou shalt be
My minstrel theme for this;
Thy birthplace has a charm for me,
Beyond the bowers of bliss.



FLOWER AND LEAF.



To me thy site disconsolate,
On turret, wall, or tower,
Makes thee appear misfortune's mate,
And desolation's dower.

Thou ask'st no kindly cultur'd soil,
Thy natal bed to be ;
Thou need'st not man's officious toil
To plant or water thee.

Sown by the winds, thou meekly rear'st,
On ruin's crumbling crest,
Thy fragile form, and there appear'st,
In smiling beauty drest.

There, in thy bleak and earthless bed,
Thou brav'st the tempest's strife ;
And giv'st, what else were cold and dead,
A lingering glow of life.

BERNARD BARTON.

Wall-flowers.

WHERE the wall-flowers grow,
Many come and go ;
Rich and poor men pass,
Lover, too, and lass ;
Children at their play,
Heads careworn and gray.



Nought of all that go
Do the wall-flowers know ;
Yet their perfumes reach
To the heart of each,—
Win one moment's share
In each passer there.

Droop thy head, and go,
Poet, from the show ;
Man thou art, not flower,
Decade liv'st, not hour,
Reason hast, and will,
Sympathy and skill.

Yet what canst thou know
More of all that go ?
Could thy verse but reach
To the heart of each,
As the wall-flower's scent,
What were thy content !

F. W. BOURDILLON.

The Water-Lily.

O H ! beautiful thou art,
Thou sculpture-like and stately river-queen !
Crowning the depths, as with the light serene
Of a pure heart.



Bright lily of the wave!
Rising in fearless grace with every swell,
Thou seem'st as if a spirit meekly brave
Dwelt in thy cell.

Lifting alike thy head
Of placid beauty, feminine yet free,
Whether with foam or pictured azure spread
The waters be.

What is like thee, fair flower,
The gentle and the firm? thus bearing up
To the blue sky that alabaster cup,
As to the shower..

Oh ! love is most like thee,
The love of woman ! quivering to the blast
Through every nerve, yet rooted deep and fast,
'Midst life's dark sea.

And faith—O, is not faith
Like thee, too, lily, springing into light
Still buoyantly, above the billows' might,
Through the storm's breath?

Yes, link'd with such high thought,
Flower, let thine image in my bosom lie !
Till something there of its own purity
And peace be wrought :



Something yet more divine
Than the clear, pearly, virgin lustre shed
Forth from thy breast upon the river's bed,
As from a shrine.

FELICIA D. HEMANS.

Solitude and the Lily.

THE LILY.

I BEND above the moving stream,
And see myself in my own dream,—
Heaven passing, while I do not pass.
Something divine pertains to me,
Or I to it,—reality
Escapes me on this liquid glass.

SOLITUDE.

The changeful clouds that float or poise on high
Emblem earth's night and day of history—
Renewed for ever, ever more to die.

Thy life-dream is thy fleeting loveliness ;
But mine is concentrated consciousness—
A life apart from pleasure or distress.

The grandeur of the whole
Absorbs my soul,
While my caves sigh o'er human littleness.



THE LILY.

Ah, Solitude !

Of marble Silence fit abode,—

I do prefer my fading face,

My loss of loveliness and grace,

With cloud-dreams ever in my view ;

Also the hope that other eyes

May share my rapture in the skies,

And, if illusion, feel it true.

RICHARD HENGIST HORNE.

From "First Sunday after Epiphany."

SEE the soft green willow springing

Where the waters gently pass,

Every way her free arms flinging

O'er the moist and reedy grass

Long ere winter blasts are fled,

See her tipp'd with vernal red,

And her kindly flower display'd

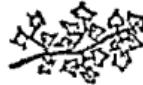
Ere her leaf can cast a shade.

Though the rudest hand assail her,

Patiently she droops awhile,

But when showers and breezes hail her,

Wears again her willing smile.



Thus I learn contentment's power
From the slighted willow bower,
Ready to give thanks and live
On the least that Heaven may give.

JOHN KEBLE.

The Willow,

OR ROSE-PROP.

HOW shall I hew thee down, thou mighty bower?
My summer-tent, my waving canopy?
I love too well thy lithe submissive power,
Thy silver beauty is too dear to me;
At first, thou wert a little rose's prop,
A new-cut willow wand, that didst o'erbear
Thy tiny nursing-plant; we took no care
To check thee, nor thy lavish growth to lop,
For thou art fair as any flower that blows;
But though thou art so pleasant to mine eye,
Methinks, each child of earth some sorrow knows,
Akin to ours; long since that infant rose
Droop'd ere its time, and bow'd its head to die,
While thou hast soar'd aloft, to toss and sigh!

CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER.

To the Witch Hazel.

M YSTERIOUS plant! whose golden tresses
wave
With a sad beauty in the dying year—
Blooming amid November's frost severe
Like the pale corpse-light o'er the recent grave!
If shepherds tell us true, thy wood has power,
With gracious influence, to avert the harm
Of ominous planets, and the fatal charm
Of spirits wandering at the midnight hour;
And thou canst point where buried treasures lie.
But yet to me thou art an emblem high
Of patient virtue, to the Christian given,
Unchanged and bright, when all is dark beside;
Our shield from wild temptations, and our guide
To treasures for the just laid up in Heaven.

ANON.





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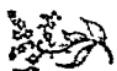
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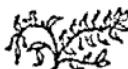



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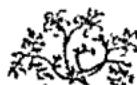
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